

HALESOWEN CHRONICLE



Thursday, April 3, 2014

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Dream drive

Sports car wish has come true for Alex

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Senior staff

Age is no barrier in the workplace

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What's On

Entertainment and television listings

Starts Page 23



Fatality prompts building rules call

AN electricians' trade association has called for changes in building regulations after a court heard how a Black Country mother died after being electrocuted.

The electrical circuits in 22-year-old Emma Shaw's flat had been signed off and certified during its construction but, around 18 months later, she died as a result of a fault.

Neil Houlst, 53, of Dane Terrace, Rowley Regis, was the qualified supervisor who signed the certification documents, and was found guilty at Wolverhampton Crown Court of breaching health and safety law. He was fined £1,000.

Now the National Association of Professional Inspectors and Testers, NAPIT, has claimed the case has highlighted long-standing concerns over the qualified supervisor model and the dangers inherent in that approach to recognising electrical competence.

Its chairman Frank Bertie said: "The NAPIT Trade Association has consistently opposed the industry model of focusing on a qualified supervisor, a model which runs too great a risk of work being completed by installers who may be neither properly trained nor genuinely motivated."

'Disgusted' — see page 3

Bank gang had hammers

FOUR masked robbers armed with hammers raided a bank in Cradley Heath.

Officers were called to Lloyds Bank on High Street shortly before 9.30am on Monday. Police said it was believed four men dressed in black had threatened staff with hammers before stealing a small amount of cash. They were seen running off towards Queen Street where a car was waiting.

Anyone with information is urged to call 101 or anonymously by calling Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

WEED WORRY LED TO DEATHS

Brides marry at town's first gay wedding



Rebecca Billington-Green, left, and Sarah-Louise Billington, both of Tipton, married at Priory Hall in Dudley

IT was a picture perfect day for a devoted couple who tied the knot in one of the country's first gay weddings.

The sun shone as Rebecca Billington-Green and Sarah-Louise Billington celebrated with their family just hours after new laws permitting same sex marriage came into force.

Ceremony

The couple who live in Tipton were married at Priory Hall in Dudley, one week after their held a commitment ceremony at the same venue.

They posed for photographs in their ivory gowns outside the grade II listed

register office with their family and 11-month-old son Jacob, who was dressed in a grey suit.

Rebecca, aged 31, a nurse at Coventry's Walsgrave Hospital, said it had been an 'emotional' day for them both.

"It was brilliant. It felt very special. Our love is the same as any heterosexual couple. It's nice to have our marriage recognised."

The couple in Coventry three years ago. Then, in 2012, on a holiday in Corfu, Rebecca proposed to Sarah-Louise, 23, who works as a hairdresser at a salon in Dudley Port.

The couple were able to take advan-

tage of a special offer Dudley Council has been running where people can have a buy one and get one free service.

Staff at Priory Hall said they had received a lot of interest from gay couples looking to have a marriage ceremony at the venue.

Superintendent registrar Penny Fulford said: "We have had a steady stream of enquiries at Priory Hall about same sex marriages. The couples that we've talked to are thrilled to have the chance to get married rather than just have the option of a civil partnership."

Report by Alex Ross and Adam Grinsell

NEIGHBOURS are shocked and mystified after worry over an invasive weed led to a couple's violent deaths at their Rowley Regis home.

Neighbours were unaware of a problem with Japanese Knotweed that so worried Dennis McRae, 52, that he battered to death his 55-year-old wife Jane with a perfume bottle before he took his own life by cutting his wrists and throat.

A note at the scene in Bryan Budd Close, signed by Mr McRae, claimed he had been driven to the act by concern over Japanese Knotweed at the rear of their property. He worried that it would make their home impossible to sell.

Neighbours spoke of a couple who only exchanged greetings to those living nearby.

Lorna Bryant, who lives next door, said the community was 'deeply saddened' by their deaths.

She was unaware of any problems over Japanese Knotweed at the properties.

Issue

"I wouldn't know what Japanese Knotweed is without being shown it. We have never had any issue with the growth behind the house," she added.

Mr McRae, who worked at Solway, Oldbury, wrote that worry over the weed added to "my growing madness."

At an inquest in Smethwick on Monday, Senior Black Country Coroner Robin Balmain recorded that Mrs McRae was unlawfully killed and that Mr McRae killed himself.

Mr Balmain said: "This



Kenneth and Jane McRae

is clearly a tragedy. The impression is Mr McRae was possibly becoming paranoid. "There is no direct evidence of that, of course."

"He had a responsible job as a lab technician, his own home free from mortgage."

"It appears he became obsessed with Japanese Knotweed in the vicinity, which was not even on his property."

"It is difficult to understand what was going on in Mr McRae's mind."

The suicide note, read in court, stated: "The despair has got so bad that I have killed her, as I did not want her to be alone without an income when I killed myself."

Their adoptive son Mark McRae, 27, said he did not understand how the tragedy could have happened.

Motorist is injured when car overturns

A MAN was seriously injured when a car hit a row of parked vehicles and overturned on a Dudley road.

Emergency services were called to Highland Road just before 5.20am on Monday after a Ford Fiesta ended up on its roof.

The man, believed to be the driver and in his 20s, was treated at the scene by the ambulance service for serious injuries and was taken to hospital for further treatment. It is believed two passengers from the car were also injured.

There was severe damage to the front of one of the parked cars and debris littered the road.

In an incident last week, a car rolled over three times before coming to a rest on its roof in Halesowen.

The female driver and passenger were able to get out of the blue Vauxhall Corsa. The crash partially blocked Narrow Lane and street signs were knocked down by the rolling Corsa.

Two cars, including a silver Renault Megane, were involved in an accident in Saltwells Road, Dudley Wood, in the early hours. The drivers were believed to have suffered minor injuries in the accident. Also, a car struck a lamp post in Mucklow Hill, Halesowen. Three casualties were treated at the scene.

X Factor in Black Country

THE X Factor auditions will be going on tour making two stops in the Black Country.

A mobile audition tour will be visiting Dudley and Wolverhampton this month as part of a 43-date trip.

The mobile tour will be at Dudley Town Hall in St James's Road on April 23 from 12pm to 4pm. It will be at the Mander Centre in Wolverhampton the following day, from 10am to 3pm or 4.30pm for those in education. Those auditioning must be aged 16 or over.



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Traders are left facing uncertainty

A BLACK Country market and almost 20 shops are facing an uncertain future after the collapse of a property business worth around half a billion pounds.

Stall holders and shopkeepers in Cradley Heath and tenants at a set of shops in Charterfield Drive, Kingswinford, have learned the parent company of the firm, which owns their properties has gone into

receivership – raising fears businesses may be forced to close.

Businesses at both locations have been sent a letter by administrators KPMG informing them that Landmaster Ltd and ten of its subsidiaries, including Brookwide Ltd, have gone into receivership and their property will now be managed by London-based management company Lee Baron. They have been

told to continue operating as normal until further notice.

Councillor Anne Shackleton, ward councillor for Cradley Heath said: "I think it will be a sad day if we don't have the market. It's the heart of the high street. This news is the last nail in the coffin for these businesses."

"I have contacted council officers to see whether we can move some,

if not all of the traders, to other vacant shops in the town."

Rob Croxen, joint receiver and restructuring partner at KPMG, said: "We are working with the asset managers to stabilise the business and will now be exploring options to maximize the underlying value of the portfolio."

KPMG is expected to look to sell some, if not all, of the assets.

Council cracking down on fraud by tenants

MORE than 50 homes have been seized by Dudley Council after tenancy fraud was uncovered. A specialist team is cracking down on council tenants that flout the rules.

Since last April there have been dozens of cases of tenancy fraud detected. The team investigates people who are suspected of illegally sub-letting homes and swapping properties without consent.

No plan to create more 20mph zones

DUDLEY Council has no plans to create more 20mph zones in the borough as Birmingham City Council prepares to roll out its own scheme across much of the city.

Council chiefs in Birmingham are preparing to pilot a scheme that will eventually cover around 90 per cent of the city's roads.

In the Black Country, one of the largest schemes will soon see the introduction of a 20mph speed limit to much of West Bromwich town centre.

Dudley Council has already introduced 20mph speed limits outside 11 schools in the borough, following proposals drawn up by council bosses.

Councillor Kurshid Ahmed, Dudley Council cabinet member for transport, said: "Having listened to public concerns we have consulted on and proactively assessed the roads at all of the schools in the borough. As a result we are now implementing a programme of speed limits, which range from 20 to 30mph, depending on each road's suitability."

He added: "There are currently no plans to expand this programme."

It also works to investigate those who try, or have secured, a council home under false pretences or have stayed in a property after the legal tenant has left or died.

As a result, 57 properties were recovered by the council. Of these, 34 of the homes were abandoned after legal proceedings were started while keys to 23 other properties were surrendered.

Waiting

In eight of the cases, the tenants had housing or Right to Buy applications cancelled or excluded.

During the period there were a total of 69 cases of tenancy fraud discovered.

Councillor Steve Waltho, cabinet member for housing, said: "Anyone we find guilty of committing housing fraud is at risk of losing their home, being fined or even going to prison."

During the previous financial year, 2012/13, 170 housing fraud investigations were launched. Fifty tenants were caught breaking the rules with some sub-letting their homes.

The council has around 22,000 properties and there are more than 4,000 people on the waiting list.

Figures in September showed 19,601 tenants in arrears with the total number falling behind on their rent up by 17 per cent in a year. Housing chiefs said the rise was due to the impact of welfare reforms including the so-called bedroom tax.

Dreams come true for children



After a health scare Alex Sargent takes a ride in his dream car, a Ferrari Testarossa

TAKING a ride in a £60,000 sports car and recording a pop song were ways youngsters celebrated fighting back to good health.

Thanks to charity Wishing Well and volunteer Steve Ford, youngsters Alex Sargent and Shannon Webb saw their wishes come true while at Russells Hall Hospital.

Car enthusiast Alex was driven around Stourbridge in a Ferrari Testarossa and Shannon got the chance to record her version of favourite song, DNA by Little Mix. The pair are the latest children who have

had dreams come true thanks to Mr Ford, who has run the charity for more than 20 years.

Alex, aged 11, of Barnett Lane, Kingswinford, made the request to ride in a sport car while in hospital for two visits following a meningitis scare. Thanks to Mr Ford's contact with PW Jones garage owner Colin Jones, a shining red Ferrari Testarossa was arranged to pick young Alex for a ride. Mr Ford set up a chance for Shannon, 13, of Surrey Road, Dudley, to record at The Den

Man, 69, has died after bus accident

A PENSIONER seriously injured after being hit by a bus in Dudley town centre has died.

The man has been named as Michael Wilkinson, aged 69, who was struck by a single decker bus on Monday afternoon, March 24.

The accident happened at the junction of King Street and Flood Street close to the entrance of Churchill Shopping Centre.

Police said Mr Wilkinson, who lived locally, had suffered serious head injuries following the accident at around 1.15pm. He died at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham with his family at his side on Tuesday morning.

Officers from West Midlands Police collision investigation unit are appealing for witnesses to the accident. Pc Paul Cope said: "We are working hard to understand the events of the afternoon and I would urge anyone who was in the area at the time and who has not yet spoken to us to call 101. Our thoughts are with Michael's family and are continuing to support them at this sad time."

An online petition is calling for safety improvements on that stretch of road. King Street was designated a bus

More signing up for e-bills

MORE than 2,500 residents in Dudley are now signed up to receive their council tax bills online following the launch of a new system.

The e-billing initiative has been advertised as part of this year's Dudley Council mail-out.

Finance boss Councillor Pete Lowe said: "We're pleased to see there has been a recent increase in the number of residents signing up for e-billing and we hope many, many more will follow suit."

To register people should go online and visit www.dudley.gov.uk/ebilling

Charity concert

BLACK Country community choir, Voices in Harmony, are on Saturday performing at the Cornbow Hall in Halesowen in aid of Cancer Research UK at 8pm.

Tickets cost £8, call tickets secretary Jenny Andrews on (01384) 635507 or email tickets@vihchoir.org

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White car taxi rule replaced by stickers

A RULE forcing taxi drivers in Dudley to use only white-coloured private hire cabs will be lifted in June.

New regulations came into force this week which will see all licensed hackney carriages displaying Dudley Council signs.

Taxi drivers won their battle to overturn the colour policy in December last year. The council had brought in the scheme to improve safety in 2006 but the move proved unpopular with cabbies, who claimed the rising cost of white-coloured cars was putting them out of business.

Following a campaign by the Dudley Private Hire and Taxi Association, the council taxi committee voted to change the rules in December. The authority is carrying improvements to the taxi service which will see all hackney carriages displaying Dudley Council door stickers.

Councillor Richard Body, chairman of the taxis committee, said: "Hackney carriage drivers licensed by Dudley Council must have stickers with the Dudley Council logo on their vehicle doors, by the door handles. Any driver who does not have the stickers will be in breach of the taxis rules and will be asked to appear before the taxis committee."

Grants offer for job plans

COMMUNITY groups and projects to help boost the job chances of people in the Black Country can apply for grants of up to £15,000 to support their work.

The Heart of England Community Foundation has been awarded just over £2 million by the European Social Fund to be spent on projects designed to get the long-term unemployed closer to the jobs market.

Applications are now being invited from groups in the Black Country. More information on how to apply is available at www.hearstofenglandcf.co.uk

Shakespeare talk

HISTORIAN Ben Alexander will give a lecture entitled 'Who Wrote the Shakespeare Sonnets?' on April 23, the anniversary of Shakespeare's birth and death. The 7.45pm talk is at the centre behind St Mary's Church, Kingswinford.

M5 wrong-way driver is spared prison

A CARE worker from Halesowen who admitted driving the wrong way down the M5 while twice over the drink drive limit has been spared an immediate jail sentence.

Katy Homer brought terror to drivers using the motorway before swerving on to the hard-shoulder to avoid a head-on collision with a lorry on December 4 last year.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard one lorry driver had just joined the motorway at around 2.30am when he saw the headlights of Homer's black Vauxhall Astra approaching.

The court was told the HGV driver had

braked before flashing his own lights and sounding his horn in a desperate bid to get the mother of three to take 'evasive action'.

Although she did not react at first, the 27-year-old eventually veered on to the hard shoulder, avoiding what would have been a head-on collision.

The court had previously heard that Homer, of Clent View Road, Colley Gate, had joined the southbound side of the motorway at junction two Oldbury before driving three miles north to Junction 1 West Bromwich.

Miss Alka Brigue, prosecuting, said upon

leaving the motorway police dealing with an unrelated matter had seen Homer's car travelling the wrong way up the south-bound sliproad.

She said they had then tried unsuccessfully to stop her vehicle as it went around the Kenrick Way roundabout.

Homer pleaded guilty to one count of dangerous driving and one count of driving with excess alcohol at a previous hearing.

Judge Michael Dudley gave her a four-month jail sentence suspended for 12 months.

Alongside the suspended sentence,

Homer, a mother-of-three, was banned from driving for three years, placed under supervision for 12 months and ordered to carry out 180 hours unpaid work.

Irresponsible

Sean Kyne, who is acting sector Crown Prosecutor from West Midlands Crown Prosecution Service, said: "Katy Homer was twice over the drink drive limit and then drove her car on the motorway in the wrong direction.

"Her irresponsible actions not only put herself in danger but other road users too."

Mother's disgust at fine after fatal electrocution

THE mother of a young woman fatally electrocuted at her flat is "disgusted" that the qualified supervisor who signed off the property's electrical circuits has been fined £1,000.

Mother-of-one Emma Shaw died after being electrocuted at the West Bromwich flat she shared with her partner in December 2007 when the 22-year-old was dealing with a leak from a boiler.

The electrical circuits had been signed off as safe by Neil Hoult, aged 53, of Dane Terrace, Rowley Regis, who was found guilty by jurors last week of one charge of failure to discharge a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act. He has been fined £1,000.

Miss Shaw's mother Diane Potter said she hoped the end of the court case, six years after her daughter's death, would allow the family to grieve.

She said: "I am disgusted. She was taken away from us and it was just a £1,000 fine. It's just not justice.

Hug

"I'm glad court has finished. It's gone on for more than six years. I haven't been able to grieve. I've been trying to keep everybody in the family going. I just wanted closure from it all so I could start grieving."

Miss Shaw had been looking forward to her first Christmas in her first home, a flat in Jefferson Place, with her partner Andrew Cross and son Brayden, who was 23-months-old at the time of her death, and is now aged eight.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard a victim impact statement from Mrs Potter taken before the court case concluded, in which she described her relationship with her daughter as more like best friends.

She said she saw her daughter the day before the tragedy, and she had given her a hug. She added: "Even now I still recall that last touch."

She paid tribute to her daughter, a former Willingsworth High School pupil who had worked in the restaurant at Asda, Great Bridge, saying: "She was bubbly and confident and had so many friends."

Miss Shaw's father Paul, who lives in Ireland, said in his own statement: "She was



Emma Shaw electrocuted while preparing for first Christmas in new home

in her first home, preparing for Christmas and a looking forward to the bright and happy future she should have had. Brayden is now eight years old and he is growing up without his mother, which is just not right."

Hoult had signed off the electrical circuits at Miss Shaw's flat as safe but investigations later revealed a circuit which fed an immersion heater in the boiler had been penetrated by a screw during the flat's construction. Hoult had not been based on site and his responsibility was to check the details on forms sent in by workers before signing them off.

Mr Gary Bell, defending him, highlighted



Neil Hoult had signed off electrical circuits as safe

his client would have preferred to have been on site himself but was given a lot of work to do and very little time in which to complete it. He added that the court case had also taken a toll on Hoult's family as his wife had a breakdown.

Judge Michael Dudley explained the law set out he could only fix an amount the defendant could afford to pay within 12 months, which is why it "may seem light".

The judge told Hoult: "You have been convicted of a grave breach of duty. The testing of electrical circuits is absolutely vital. You were responsible for the failures in checking paperwork. Because of your fail-

ures, and those of others who created this situation, you failed to detect a metal stud frame behind a plaster board at the house was live for a period of some 18 months."

The jury had deliberated for four hours and 35 minutes before finding him guilty.

Hoult's co-accused Christopher Tomkins, 52, from Rowley Village, Rowley Regis, was found not guilty.

The court heard Hoult and Tomkins were employed by Anchor Building and Electrical Services Ltd, contracted to carry out electrical work during the development of Jefferson Place in 2006. The firm had since gone into liquidation.

NEWS in brief

Hundreds taking part in arts festival

HUNDREDS of young musicians and dancers are taking part in a festival in the borough.

Dudley Performing Arts groups are partners in the Dudley Arts Hub, which includes choirs, wind and brass bands, string orchestras, dance and drama groups. Most of the events will take place at Dudley Town Hall and at Nether-ton Arts Centre.

There will also be an appearance at the National Festival of Music for Youth in Oxford.

History of fast food on menu

HISTORIAN Samantha Badger will talk about the history of the fast-food industry at a meeting of the Black Country Society later this month.

The former Stourbridge College lecturer will chronicle the changing eating habits in the Black Country between 1800 and 1970 with her talk Stage Coach Inns to Indian Cuisine at the Black Country Living Museum on April 23, at 7.30pm. Admission is £1.50 to non-members. Call (01384) 873279 for details.

Boot camp fits the bill at Dell

A NEW boot camp style fitness session is being launched at The Dell Stadium in Brierley Hill on Sunday mornings for people aged 16 and over of all abilities.

Led by a fully qualified instructor, it runs from 9.30am and includes an intense and fun workout. The class costs £3 per session or free for those holding a Lifestyles membership. Call (01384) 812800.

Walk in memory of cricket legend

FANS are planning to put in the miles for a charity walk in memory of a famous cricketer. Former England international Basil D'Oliveira played for Worcestershire. The 74-mile Walk for Basil from New Road cricket ground to Cardiff is taking place May 1 to 4. To sponsor or take part call Mark Ashbourne on 07506 747619.

Signal for recruits

A HERITAGE railway is looking to recruit new volunteers.

The Severn Valley Railway's Volunteer Job Fair is on Saturday, April 12, at its Kidderminster station from 10am to 4pm.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



IN case you missed the latest Met Office forecast, looking at climate in Britain until 2040, let me summarise it. Summers will be hotter, except when they are colder while winters will be milder, except when they are less mild. Even the Met Office's greatest fan, the BBC, was reduced to summing it all up with a headline to treasure: "UK's future climate to be all sorts."

GOOD to see Kermit the frog entering the debate on Scottish independence (he supports the Union). My interview with the Muppets in a Birmingham hotel many years ago was a highlight of my dazzling career. I can report that Kermit is unfailingly polite and hospitable and is quite the most intelligent, thoughtful and articulate latex amphibian I have ever interviewed.

MISS Piggy, on the other hand, is a shameless hussy who flirts outrageously with reporters and hints that there is something improper going on with Kermit. I shall never forget, as Miss Piggy alleged the couple were planning a romantic weekend, the plaintive voice of Kermit: "Do not believe her. Trust the frog."

IN his EU debate with Ukup leader Nigel Farage, the deputy prime minister Nick Clegg rattled off that the EU made us "richer, stronger, safer." Richer? EU membership actually costs us £50,000 million a year. If we are wealthier than other parts of the EU it is entirely because Britain stayed out of every Euro-zealot's dream currency, the euro. Stronger? How can any EU nation be stronger when membership depends on giving up sovereignty? Safer? Has the EU's recent meddling in Ukraine made you feel particularly safe? The EU, founded as a free-trade area, is turning into one of the most imperialist and expansionist powers this world has seen, pushing its borders and its influence right into the nose of the Russia bear and leading Britain into all sorts of risks that are none of our business. The EU actually makes us poorer, weaker and worried.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Plan to restore garden to its Georgian glory

A WALLED garden in the heart of a Grade I listed park in Halesowen is set to put on the tourism map as part of a £500,000 plan.

Hales Owen Abbey Trust has won its bid to take over the site, owned by Birmingham Metropolitan College at The Leasowes park in Halesowen. The garden, which was created in the 1770s, will now be handed to the trust for an undisclosed sum.

Executive director for estates at Birmingham Metropolitan College John Starmer said they were pleased the sale had been approved.

The Trust plans to restore the garden to its former Georgian glory and open it to visitors. It has been unused since the college, which took over the Stourbridge campus last year, moved its horticultural centre for students with learning disabilities to Kidderminster.

Lottery

Mr Freer said a fund-raising appeal has been launched to find £20,000 needed to fund the purchase and initial costs. The group then hopes to secure lottery cash to fund the £500,000 restoration.

"It's very exciting," said Mr Freer. "It's an important garden and one will hope people will enjoy visiting."

Plans including opening period greenhouses and a bothy, where gardeners would stay overnight.

by Heather Large

Mr Freer added that there were plans to set up a trust to manage the garden. Hales Owen Abbey Trust hopes to install a special covenant on the land so it always used for public benefit.

Members are now appealing for help from businesses and individuals to support the project. Mr Freer said he hoped to find a solicitor to undertake the conveyancing free of charge.

The Leasowes has been heralded as being of national importance. Farmland was transformed into an idealised landscape of wooded valleys, grassland, lakes and streams in the mid-18th century by poet William Shenstone. The walled garden was created in the 1770s by the next owner, Edward Horne. The site was visited by future American Presidents Thomas Jefferson and John Adams.

To help with the project contact Mr Freer on 0121 5505440

Town's bishop is youngest



The Rt Rev Graham Usher and Archbishop Justin Welby

DUDLEY has a new bishop after Canon Graham Usher was ordained in the role in a special service at St Paul's Cathedral in London. The 43-year-old is the youngest bishop in the country.

Hundreds gathered to watch as Mr Usher consecrated by Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby at the ceremony.

Wife

Among those proudly looking on was Mr Usher's wife, Rachel, and two children Chad, 13, and Olivia, 11.

Friends from Hexham, where Mr Usher served as Dean for five years, also attended.

The Archbishop explained the role of a bishop as one who is called to serve and care for the flock of Christ and to lead them in the way of holiness.

Mr Usher will be formally welcomed to the Diocese of Worcester with a service at Dudley's Top Church on May 3. He will then be installed at Worcester Cathedral on May 4. Mr Usher's ministry will begin after these services.

Bus chief chosen as principal at college

A SENIOR transport boss has been chosen to take over one of the West Midlands's biggest colleges.

Andrew Cleaves, a National Express senior executive, will step into the shoes of Dame Christine Braddock DBE, at Birmingham Metropolitan College from May, to become its new principal and chief executive.

Reputation

Dame Christine had preceded over Birmingham Metropolitan College's takeover of Stourbridge College and built up its reputation for working with business.

Mr Cleaves is currently managing director of the transport group's international division, having formerly run its Birmingham-based UK Coach business.

He previously spent 12 years in senior roles at Tube Lines, managing the public private partnership with Transport for London for infrastructure and maintenance of the Tube.

He was part of the team which invested £10 million on a training school for engineering apprenticeships for its workforce.

He will oversee the college's 50,000 students across 20 campuses and centres. The college formed in 2009 when Matthew Boulton College and Sutton Coldfield College merged.

Hassle Free Days Out

Date	Excursion	Adult	Senior	Child	Route Code
APRIL	16+	60+	3-15		
Sat 5th	The National Archives - Kew , London to book this trip Contact Phil Lamb on 0121 422 9131	£21	£21	n/a	-
Tue 15th	Cotswolds "Moreton Market & Bourton" 2 SEATS FOR £22 (Every Third Tuesday of the Month)	£13	£12	n/a	D
Sat 19th	Oxford - Nifty City Explorer Tour "Included Hop On Hop Off Open-Top Bus Ticket"	£25	£23	£18	C
Sat 19th	Oxford as you please... "Shopping & Sightseeing" ALL SEATS ONLY £15.00	£15	£15	£15	C
Mon 21st	Weston-super-Mare on Easter Monday "2 SEATS FOR £25"	£15	£14	£13	B
Thu 24th	Nifty 50's Mystery Lunch Excursion (Last Thursday of the Month)	£22	£22	n/a	TBC
MAY					
Sun 4th	Highclere Castle (Downton Abbey) House, Gardens & Egyptian Exhibition	£40	£40	£40	C
Mon 5th	Llandudno Victorian Extravaganza Bank Holiday Special	£17	£16	£15	A
Sat 10th	Barmouth... for the day	£17	£16	£15	B
Sat 10th	The National Archives - Kew , London To book this trip Contact Phil Lamb on 0121 422 9131	£21	£21	£21	-
Tue 13th	Abergavenny Market & Tewkesbury 2 For Tuesday (2 SEATS FOR £22)	£14	£13	n/a	D
Fri 16th	Powis Castle & Gardens "Nifty National Trust Coach Club NT Member £14"	£28	£25	n/a	B
Sat 17th	York - Nifty City Explorer Tour "Includes Hop On Hop Off Open-Top Bus Ticket"	£25	£25	£20	A
Sat 17th	York as you please... "Shopping & Sightseeing" ALL SEATS ONLY £15.00	£15	£15	£15	A
Tue 20th	Cotswolds "Moreton Market & Bourton" "2 SEATS FOR £22 (Every Third Tuesday of the Month)	£13	£12	n/a	D
Sun 25th	West Midlands Safari Park All Inclusive Ticket (inc. unlimited ride wristband):	£18	£17	£16	E
Mon 26th	Weston-Super-Mare on Bank Holiday "2 SEATS FOR £25"	£27	-	£26	E
Thu 29th	Nifty 50's Mystery Lunch Excursion (Last Thursday of the Month)	£15	£14	£13	B
Sat 31st	Warner Bros Studio, London Harry Potter Studio Tour	£22	£22	n/a	TBC
		£50	£50	£40	C

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School is finally to get zebra crossing

A CROSSING is being installed outside a Halesowen primary school following a 200-name petition calling for action.

Dudley Council has now started work on a zebra crossing outside St Margaret's at Hasbury Primary School on the busy Hagley Road. A 20mph speed limit will also be put in place.

Councillor Donella Russell, ward member for Belle Vale, said residents in the area had been concerned about the situation for a long time.

"St Margaret's and local residents have been fighting for over quarter of a century for a crossing to be put outside the school on a busy main road. This road is a major route into Halesowen from both Birmingham and Worcestershire.

"For many years the school has been asking for a crossing yet nothing has been done about it. People that cross that road regularly have stated that it is a death trap and on numerous occasions the crossing patrol at the school has risked her life almost being hit on a regular basis. A few years ago the crossing patrol was run over and ended up in hospital.

Councillor Russell has been working with Labour candidate Elizabeth Keenan on the campaign and headteacher Pauline Rogers also supported the move.

Father jailed after dealing drugs from his family home

POLICE found more than £2,000 worth of cannabis when they searched a couple's family home, a court heard.

The cannabis was found under the stairs and in an upstairs bedroom at the house in Cradley Heath where the couple lived with their three children, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

Dean Cooke was jailed for a year after admitting two charges of possession of cannabis with intent to supply. His partner of six-and-a-half years Lugina Capecci was given a three month sentence, suspended for 18 months, for the same offences.

Recorder Geoffrey Pryce said: "The aggravating feature in this case is that you were using your children's home as a centre for your drug dealing."

Cooke, 27, had been selling drugs to friends to help fund his cannabis addiction, while Capecci, 24, occasionally took messages and arranged for drugs to be dropped off.

Miss Alka Brigue, prosecuting, said police executed a warrant at their former address in Barrs Road, Cradley Heath, on May 29.

"Officers did a search of the property and under the stairs found a quantity of plastic slip bags and a bag containing 68.6 grams of cannabis with a street value of £680."

In a bedroom, police found

by Jon Pritchard

a further 138 grams of cannabis with a street value of £1,380, 70 tablets worth £175 and 5.7 grams of amphetamine. The couple, now of Adelaide Avenue, West Bromwich, also admitted possession of a class C drug.

Gurdeep Garcha, for Cooke, said: "He takes responsibility for what he did and he knows that this is a serious offence. What he did is very different to supplying to strangers commercially on the street."

Mr Rashid Mohammed, for Capecci, said: "The main involvement was to take messages but she accepts that she sometimes did more than that."

Cooke was given two 12 month sentences for possession of cannabis with intent to supply with a further four month sentence for possession of a class C drug to run concurrently. He was also ordered to pay £100 victim surcharge and Capecci was told to pay a £80 surcharge.

Studio adventure is out of this world



Katie and Natasha with Philip Olivier, Sylvester McCoy and Sophie Aldred

DOCTOR Who found himself with two new companions in the shape of students from Cradley Heath.

Ormiston Forge Academy students Katie Monckton and Natasha Chifamba, both 15, dropped in on an audio book recording session with the stars of Doctor Who.

The pair attended the recording in London after winning a writing competition judged by Nicholas Briggs, who provides the voice of the Daleks.

They met the seventh Doctor, Sylvester McCoy, who recently starred as a wizard in The Hobbit movies, Sophie Aldred who plays his companion Ace and actor Philip Olivier.

Sophie Aldred said: "It was great to see the Forge students in the studio. I enjoyed talking to them about their studies and their hopes for the future. It's important to support our young people."

Natasha from Rowley Regis and Katie from Cradley Heath listened to the actors perform a new Doctor Who adventure called, The Mask of Tragedy, which comes out later this year.

NEWS in brief

Scheme to boost work chances

A CAMPAIGN to promote the employment of people with a learning disability or autism has been launched by Dudley Voices for Choice (DVC) and Dudley Council's Employment Plus service.

It aims to help people find work by making sure disabled people have opportunities to fulfil their potential.

Community boss Councillor Dave Branwood said: "We're encouraging local employers to get actively involved. We want Dudley to lead the way by increasing the number of people with learning disabilities or autism in employment in the borough"

Employers can contact DVC on (01384) 422666 or Employment Plus Dudley on (01384) 813305.

Service offering open day advice

PEOPLE will be able to find out more about a service aimed at keeping older and vulnerable people safe in their homes during an event in Quarry Bank.

The Living Well, Feeling Safe advice service is a partnership involving Dudley Council, Age UK, West Midlands Police, Victim Support, West Midlands Fire Service and others.

A drop in information day will be held at Quarry Bank Community Centre, Sheffield Street, on April 11, noon until 4pm. Contact (01384) 817743.

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IN MY VIEW

WITH
MARK
ANDREWS



JOSIE Cunningham, some people may remember, was the 'model' who received £4,800 worth of breast enhancements on the NHS, because her slim-line figure was 'ruining her life'. Reportedly, she showed off her new profile by posing topless in a national newspaper, but I must have missed the pictures. Which is a shame really. After all, you should never pay for something without having a good look at what you're getting for your money.

Anyway, Josie now appears to have had a change of heart. Not only is she hoping to have the operation reversed, she also says she will be suing the NHS for clinical negligence and emotional distress.

This truly is beyond parody. The latest instalment in this rather tawdry soap opera is that Josie has now become pregnant during her new career as a prostitute. Well, I suppose you might as well put your capital to work. Perhaps she should have bought her new assets through the Enterprise Allowance Scheme.

In the meantime, an operation that would enable Staffordshire schoolboy Ben Baddeley to walk has been cancelled by the NHS due to a lack of funds.

Thankfully, Ben will get the treatment which will transform his life. Donations have poured in from the general public, including an anonymous benefactor who has stepped in to fund the bulk of the £20,000 cost of the treatment.

At the same time, former Black Country police chief Mike Collins - still working as an advanced driving examiner at the age of 82 - is collecting money to help pay for the physiotherapy Ben will need once he has had his operation.

If you are able to help, donations can be made on the website www.justgiving.com/yimby/benpainfreeforlife2

And in the meantime, maybe it is time for a long, hard look at what the National Health Service exists for.



WHAT is the first thing that comes into your mind every time you see disgraced former Fifa chief on television?

Do you feel a sense of outrage at how this ridiculous figure has turned the world football governing body into a laughing stock while lining his own pockets? Or maybe, like me, you wonder if he is going to utter Dixon of Dock Green's catchphrase, 'evenin' all'.

In the same way that every time the director of award winning movie 12 Years a Slave appears on television, my first thought is not 'what a talented fellow this chappie is'.

But rather 'That is not Steve McQueen!'



Gary Hawkins, who worked at Carcraft



Ex-police chief Mike Collins, 82, still at work



Albert Billingham, on his 90th birthday at B&Q

Workers proving age is no barrier

MARK ANDREWS looks at our older workforce and the challenges facing some senior members of staff

WE can all look forward to a few more years in the workplace thanks to the fact that we are living longer than ever before.

But once we reach our 50s and 60s will our employers still want us or will years of experience count for nothing?

There are currently record numbers of older people in employment but it seems they are not finding the workplace as easy as their younger counterparts.

New research by employment lawyers Slater & Gordon found that millions of workers in Britain could have a case for illegal age discrimination in the workplace with many saying they were treated differently to their younger colleagues, passed over for promotion and worried they are at greater risk of redundancy.

Their fears are not unfounded, last year car sales manager Gary Hawkins successfully sued Wednesbury motor dealer Carcraft after he was sacked for being too old - at just 52.

The married father-of-four was awarded an undisclosed payout running into thousands of pounds after his former employer was judged to have been guilty of aged discrimination.

Thankfully he has now found work as a branch manager at Scottish Motor Auctions in Bilston, where he says the atmosphere is totally different.

"I couldn't be happier, I have worked with the guy before, and we both know each other," says Mr Hawkins, who is now 53.

After winning his case, Mr Hawkins declared he had struck a blow for mid-



Older workforce - Paul Beddow who works at Argos at Merry Hill

dle-aged workers everywhere. "I didn't even know I wasn't part of the youth culture until they got rid of me," he said. "I believe I was the oldest guy working there and they had about 520 members of staff on all the sites."

Edward Cooper, Slater & Gordon's head of employment law, said their survey had found one in 10 employers felt ignored by their manager, and one in seven had seen younger staff promoted ahead of them since hitting 40.

This comes despite a year-long study by management consulting group Ac-

centure which found that older workers were more efficient than younger ones, also having lower levels of staff absenteeism and sickness.

Mr Cooper says: "Very few businesses enforce a retirement age but this research shows that many will still sideline and isolate staff when they get to a certain age."

The report suggested that 54 was the age at which career prospects seemed to be most affected.

Some senior citizens are proving leading the way when it comes to working

later in life. Recently, handyman Albert Billingham finally decided to hang up his overalls at the ripe old age of 90.

And even though Mr Billingham has decided to leave his job at B & Q in Bristol, he is still keeping active by helping his son Martin, 57, with the restoration of his home. Mr Billingham had worked continuously for 77 years, only taking a handful of days of sick during that time.

And there are employers in the West Midlands who realise that age also brings with it a wealth of experience, not to mention life skills which no training course can teach.

Retired teacher Paul Beddows decided to take up a Christmas job at Argos in the Merry Hill centre - and more than four years on, he is still in the post.

Summer Mr Beddows, who is 62, spent 35 years working in the education sector, teaching at Rowley Regis College, Josiah Mason College in Birmingham, and Stourbridge College, before deciding to take early retirement in the summer of 2009.

However, within five months he decided to return to work, and has not looked back.

"The trouble with being retired is that you tend to just sit at home doing nothing. There are jobs to do, but if I wasn't quite in the mood, I might have thought 'I can always do it tomorrow'." At the age of 82, former police chief Mike Collins is still working as an advanced driving examiner with the charity Rospa.

Mr Collins has continued to work ever since retiring as a superintendent at West Bromwich police station in 1978, having also spent two years as a Red Cross aid worker in war-torn Somalia and Burma. Mr Collins, who typically works around two days a week, says he still finds his work very rewarding. He says "I think there will come a time when you start to lose a bit of credibility, when you are a bit too old. But at the moment I'm still enjoying it."

Poorest are paying price

IAIN Duncan Smith has promised to get to grips with Britain's benefits culture, and make sure that work pays.

Local councils across the West Midlands warn they will have to make tough decisions and cut services as they seek to balance the books.

And then, caught somewhere in the middle, are the children of some of the poorest families, according to Children's Commissioner for England Maggie Atkinson.

"The poorest families, and therefore their children, are paying the price now," she says.

"We did in-depth analysis on the welfare bill. Families, parents with children, especially where there was already economic pressure on the households, would be ill-served by the welfare reforms."

Atkinson says not only are families on low incomes being hit by cuts to social security benefits, but library closures and reductions in leisure spending are also hitting the young.

In an interview with Total Politics magazine, the commissioner says local government cuts had also hit after-school and holiday clubs for children.

Atkinson says Work and Pensions Secretary Iain Duncan Smith's welfare shake-up, part of the Government's efforts to cut the deficit and encourage people who can work to take a job, had 'not served families well'.

Impact

"I recognise, and our assessment recognises, that for some families Universal Credit would do good, would help them to make their money go further. But even with those effects we were adamant, and I remain adamant, that the welfare reforms have not served families well."

The commissioner says the impact of the Government's austerity measures on children are not confined to the welfare reforms.

"Future generations coming down the line may well have a better time of it, but there are children now who are paying the price in England, not only for the reduction in welfare spending, but in libraries, in leisure facilities, in early intervention, in after-school clubs or holiday clubs."

"All those things have been under such pressure in local government that many of them have stopped doing them. And that isn't just an urban issue."

Atkinson is no stranger to controversy. In 2010 Denise Fergus, the mother of murdered two-year-old James Bulger, called for Atkinson to be sacked over her comments about the two boys who murdered her son. While saying the murder was 'exceptionally unpleasant', Atkinson said she thought they were too young at 10 years old to be tried for his murder.

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Parking must be free in town centre

JUST look what has happened to Dudley over recent years —shop owners finding it increasingly difficult to provide a viable service because of dwindling numbers of shoppers. It must be time for free parking in Dudley town centre.

Millions of pounds are to be spent on a multi-storey car park, which will be empty if parking charges are applied?

Good fresh foods are available on the market, which are cheap and important in a healthy diet. These will be neglected as customers opt for free car parking in Merry

Hill. It is short sighted of the council not to see that free parking would encourage footfall to the market and shops, increasing income to local businesses and eventually to the council.

There is no hope of rejuvenating Dudley when there is such stiff competition from 10,000 free parking spaces in Merry Hill. The council charging for spaces makes no sense at all when Dudley is trying to re-establish itself as a popular market town.

C JONES
Tividale

Embrace advances from city

RE the Greater Black country/Birmingham and the letter from J Wardle.

Stourbridge is NOT in the Black Country for starters, neither is Wolverhampton, Walsall, West Bromwich, Smethwick, Halesowen, etc.

So how does that make the BC, which for argument's sake is a two to three mile radius of Dudley (from Tipton to Gornal down to Brierley Hill and across to Cradley Heath) bigger than a city over 100 square miles? Guess you would call somebody from Luton a Cockney.

Maybe you should remember that Birmingham took over Aston, Handsworth and Sutton Coldfield in the past and gave over land to create Sandwell, Walsall and Solihull.

Your goodness and the old diehards may resist Birmingham's advances but the younger generation, if they know what's good for them, must realise that the city is the brand.

BRETT ASHCROFT
Merrivale Road
Hurst Green
Halesowen

LETTERS

to the Editor

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

E-MAIL

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Time to keep dogs out of your parks

I HAVE noticed over the recent months, that a number of people, including myself have complained about the amount of dog mess round our streets.

I would like to draw attention to one particular incident.

My daughter lives in Albion Street, Wall Heath, right next to the park.

Saturday, March 23 happened to be a nice, warm day, but she could not have the doors or windows open as the smell of dog excrement coming from the park was overpowering.

It was so powerful we thought it was on our shoes or clothes.

Surely this is a health hazard to the children playing there, also to the residents nearby? There must

be a hundred dog walkers visiting this park during the day and not everyone bothers to clean up after their animals, also at the same time letting them off the leash to run wild.

I think it's time we followed the example of the Canadians and Americans and set up special fenced off dog walking areas in our parks, making the parks cleaner so that our children could play both in safety and free from dog mess.

Either this or ban dogs from public areas altogether.

And yes, I am an animal lover, including dogs.

T DAVIES
Dudley

Back at Stone Square one

BACK in 2004 Councillor Les Jones unveiled the new Stone Square 'public space' which had been created at a cost of approximately £800k, losing several parking spaces in the process.

Now, almost exactly ten years later, we have Councillor Khurshid Ahmed proposing that the square be altered as part of the £6.7m revamp, gaining 10 parking spaces in the process.

I wonder if this is what Councillor Jones meant when he said the development was "just the start of fantastic things to come"?

Successive administrations in Dudley have dramatically failed to create the conditions for success in our shopping centre. I only hope that the latest £6.7m spending is not as catastrophic a failure as the Stone Square folly. The people of Dudley deserve better.

B ETHERIDGE
Sedgley

Get rid of all that clutter

GOOD news to read that the new boss of Merry Hill used to live in Wolverhampton, and remembers what Merry Hill was like before it started declining.

As well as Mr Butterworth's ideas for improving catering areas, I hope he will go back to the Richardson twins' principles of wide uncluttered aisles. They would not have allowed it to have all the market style stalls, and pop ups everywhere.

Also cars in the centre were a rarity rather than the norm, and certainly not second hand ones.

R GWILLIAMS
Brierley Hill

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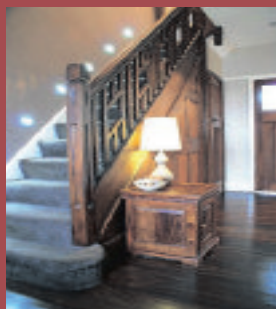
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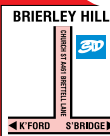
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Chairman presides over AGM

GRANGE'E' GUILD

THE AGM of Grange "E" Guild was held at Grange Court, Stourbridge on Tuesday March 4 and was presided over by chairman Hazel Smith.

All available minutes of the 2013 AGM were read, approved and signed. The chairman, secretary and treasurer will serve for the next 12 months. Resignations were received from Joan Biddlestone, registrar and hostess Margaret Blower.

These positions will be covered temporarily by other members until permanent officers can be found. The chairman then presented Joan and Margaret with gifts on behalf of the guild and thanked them both for their loyal service.

Jill Attwood gave an up to date financial report and Marlene O'Hanlon reminded members that the next meeting of the Luncheon Club would be at the Whittington Inn on April 14.

Members were served a fish and chip supper followed by tea and coffee. The raffle was then drawn and prizes were won by Pat Rae, Chris Holton and Jean Williams.

The sales table for April will have an Easter theme.

The meeting was followed on April 1 with the speaker giving a talk about Schellenberg's African Bakery Project.

New members and guests will always receive a warm welcome at any of our meetings. For further information call secretary Jean Williams on 01384 832439.

Guests are taken back to the 1940s



Speaker John Moberley, with registrar Jan Burrows, right and treasurer Sandra Chappell

THE March meeting of the Dudley South Ladies Luncheon was particularly enjoyable as chairman Mary Jones welcomed 33 members to hear speaker John Moberley.

He asked "Do you remember when...?" Following an excellent three-course lunch he reminded guests about life in the 1940s when the war changed everyone's lives forever.

There was free milk for mothers and children and penicillin was only available for soldiers. Women received an old age pension and two weeks paid holiday was first introduced.

John showed samples of the meagre rations and clothing coupons. He wore a daz-

DUDLEY S LADIES LUNCH CLUB

zling fairisle pullover originally created to use up odd bits of wool. He brought a gas mask and stone hot water bottle to help his audience enter into the spirit of nostalgia.

Ann Rogers confirmed two outings, firstly to the Blind Institute, including lunch, on May 21 and Dudley Zoo with a cream tea on June 25. A coach outing will be arranged to Touchwood Shopping Centre, Solihull.

The next luncheon will be at the Kingfisher Hotel, Wall Heath, on Friday, April 11 at 12.30pm when the speaker will be Ray Sturdy on Whitley Court.

Max keen to tell castle history

KINGSWINFORD & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AT the March meeting members and visitors were entertained by Max Kean.

His subject was Dudley Castle and after making an entrance in period costume he recounted the history of the castle and its owners through the centuries.

Starting with a wooden structure and rebuilt in

stone with additions over the years. The present remains are mainly those built by John Dudley.

In the 1850s the castle and grounds were the scene of spectacular entertain-

ments and in 1937 became the home to Dudley Zoo. The next meeting is on Monday April 7 at 7.30pm at the community centre, in High Street. Ray Sturdy will present 'The Real Dad's Army'.

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Fleur Petford, of Kingswinford, as Lola with Mitchell Bastable as Tony and showgirls Toni Oakley and Beth Henwood

BARRY Manilow's glamorous musical Copacabana will be brought to life on a Black Country stage next week.

Members of Cradley Heath-based TAB Operatic Society are busy rehearsing for performances which will run from April 8 to 12. The musical takes place at Brierley Hill Civic Hall.

It tells the story of the romance between Tony, played by society newcomer Mitchell Bastable, and his showgirl girlfriend Lola, who will

be played by Fleur Petford. Co-stars include long-standing TAB member Louise Griffin and Grant Chapman, while taking to the stage as the villain Rico will be John Nicholas and Sarah Oliver as his partner Conchita.

Glittering

Audrey Henwood, spokeswoman for TAB Operatic said: "It's a very glittering and glamorous show set in the 1950s. It's a good light-hearted show which will be enjoyed by all."

Written by Barry Manilow and inspired by his hit song of the same name, Copacabana only became avail-

able to amateur companies and schools in 2006.

Performances will take place at 7.15pm at the Civic Hall in Bank Street and there will be a 2pm matinee on April 12. Tickets cost between £10 and £13.50 and are available on 07722417962.

Last year, the society performed the classic Hollywood musical High Society.

Members rehearse on Friday nights at Dudley Wood Methodist Church.

For more information visit the company's website at www.taboperatic.com

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One of the photographs on show, with members from 1939 featured



Delight for Bill Shuker, left, after spotting an old friend



Bloomfield Road Youth Club reunion at Brook Street Community Centre in Tipton



Footballers, with Sam Craddick, front row, second left



A picture of members of the youth club from the 1980s

Happy reunion brings back the joys of youth

MEMORIES of water fights, late night camping trips and footballing triumphs were relived as former members of a long-running youth club met up for a reunion.

Laughter filled Brook Street Community Centre in Tipton as Bloomfield Road Youth Club memories were recalled.

Dating back to 1925, the club's old premises were demolished in 1978 but it did continue in partnership with Tipton Green Methodist Church until 1986 before disbanding.

During its heyday the club was the main place for youngsters of the town to meet up, and take part in activities included games, annual camping trips to Earlswood in Warwickshire, bonfires and sports days.

Samuel Craddick, a retired tool-maker at Triplex now aged 82, was the oldest member of the former club to attend the event, which for

MEMORY LANE

By Alex Homer

him triggered thoughts of the days when he played inside right for the club's football team in the West Bromwich Amateur League.

The grandfather-of-four, who now lives in Coseley, joined the football team in 1953 and played until 1956. In his first season, the club finished runners-up in the league and he also remembered one campaign which saw the team through to the semi-finals of a knockout cup.

Mr Craddick went on to referee from 1958 in the West Bromwich Amateur League and Wolverhampton Works League, before graduating to the Worcestershire Combination and West Midlands leagues.

Of his time at Bloomfield, he said: "We had some pretty good players I remember. Our outstanding player was Reg Pulley who

played inside left. I was hoping to see him but I haven't spoken to him for years. I know two or three of the team have passed away, which is a great shame."

Old films of some of the club's milestone events and anniversaries were played, as cine footage from 1963-1986 had been converted into DVDs. Children could be seen trying to flip pancakes in old photographs, while others captured old sports teams and bonfires.

Roger Hill, the former boys club leader, and a retired former owner of CBS a Dudley architectural ironmongery company, went through the boys club and youth club himself before becoming one of its leaders.

The 66-year-old, who lives in Mansion Close, Dudley, said around 145 former members, spanning four generations, had attended the reunion. He added: "For me, my favourite memory is just the comradeship. The club's motto was loyalty and service and I think that's really shown in the number of people who came."



Linda Greaves and Jackie Whitehouse with an old photograph

ADVERTISEMENT

Ann's smile
puts her in top gear

WILLENHALL'S Ann Skitt retrieves her bike from the garage, deftly fixes a slipped chain, and is ready "to go anywhere."

A young-at-heart 75-year-old, she oozes charisma and charm, still goes to the gym "when she needs to shed a few pounds" and is the life and soul of the party at her local Young At Heart Club where she is a volunteer worker.

It's hard to imagine that his retired assembly worker could ever be knocked back. But failing teeth "became an embarrassment,"

she recalls. Recently she was fitted with implant-retained dentures, inspired by a newspaper article on Steven Burchell's work at the Denture Clinic.

She says: "You don't realise how having bad teeth can affect you until you have treatment like this and you get the confidence back. The whole shape of my mouth has changed. I could not have wished for better treatment. My care was first class and Steven has become like family to us."

Suction solution *is this the answer for you?*

A CUTTING-EDGE development to help resolve the stability problems faced by thousands of denture wearers is being offered by the Denture Clinic.

Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) GDC108353, who heads the teams at his North Street practice in Dudley, and other clinics across the region, says the invention has the potential to resolve all-too-common denture stability issues.

Prosthetics are held in place by tiny valve-operated suction devices which are built into the prescription. A clever diaphragm principle, triggered by bite pressure on patients' gums, creates a 'sucking' vacuum between the soft-tissue mouth lining and the prosthetic.

Steven, whose clinics attracts patients from as far as Spain, the Isle of Skye and the Isle of Anglesey, adds: "The denture revolution is evolving at a frightening pace."

"In recent times we have seen, what I can describe only as strident steps forward, with implant-retained over-dentures, 'teeth-in-a-day' implant procedures and suction solution dentures, all coming into main-stream dentistry."

"We also have clever injection moulding technology which allows excellent fitting outcomes and our clinical solutions have never been so appealing."

"Implant dentistry as a resolve for stabilisation issues



The Ultra Suction system is available for both top and lower dentures, enables the construction of a plateless top denture and can be successfully used in relined work

is not suitable for everyone, neither is it all patients' first preference, but the Ultra Suction prosthetics offer yet another possibility.

"The beauty of this affordable technology is that it can deliver for the right patient excellent denture retainer

qualities without the invasive clinical procedures required for implant work. We have always endeavoured to be on the very cusp of clinical development and this is another 'tool' in our commitment to ever-try to deliver results which are greater than patient expectations."

"Lower dentures can often be troublesome as stability is compromised by shrinking gums and bone erosion - it's all part of the ageing process. Ill-fitting dentures create painful friction problems on gums and not least, be a source of compromised chewing and embarrassment."

Reduction

Steven adds: "The device can be mounted on upper or lower teeth and because of its efficiency allows us to consider a reduction in the size of the acrylic 'plate' which can result in improved speech and taste."

Typically, Denture Clinic patients will be assigned more than three-and-a-half clinical hours surgery time in achieving the best possible outcome.

Dentures have traditionally never been associated with cosmetic makeovers, "but our high-quality prosthetics have quite literally taken years off some of our patients," says Steven. "Can dentures look glamorous? Emphatically, yes - we have taken years off the appearance of some of our patients."

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Pastor hopeful his wife will be allowed to return

A CHURCH pastor says he is hopeful of overturning a decision to refuse his wife of 14 years residence in the UK.

But he is already counting up the £5,000 cost of the ordeal.

Robert Cooper is appealing against the Home Office's rejection of a UK entry clearance as a spouse for his Brazilian wife Adna. The 39-year-old, who lives in Pensnett, appeared as a witness at an asylum and immigration tribunal in Birmingham last week.

Homeland

Adna's application was made last April as the couple looked to move back to UK following a nine-year spell in her homeland. But Adna, aged 35, was refused, partly because Robert could not prove he earned more than £18,600 a year in his new job — a requirement only recently introduced.

The refusal was despite the couple's marriage in Kingswinford and a three-year period when both worked full-time in the Black Country before the move to Brazil.

Mr Cooper, who works for the Renewal Presbyterian Church based in London, said: "The case came down to two issues — will the judge accept accountant receipts offered instead of paylips supporting my income and if the decision impacts my human rights. We are talking about a wife of 14 years here."

Robert is unable to supply paylips up to six months old because his church was run from Brazil until October, when it became a UK-based limited company. Robert can only show receipts in a bid to prove he earns more than the required amount.

Robert said: "Taking everything which has happened so far, it has cost me about £5,000. If we fail, we will be reapplying with the six paylips I will have by then. That is more money. It



Robert and Adna Cooper from Pensnett pictured in happier times

is providing more of a strain on us."

Robert faces an anxious wait to discover the outcome of his appeal hearing, which lasted an hour.

He expects to receive a decision this month but maybe forced to wait another 28 days as the Home Office will be given a right to appeal. It another

episode in a year-and-a-half ordeal for the couple, who met 14 years ago while Robert was on a Christian mission in Sao Paulo.

They married at Kingswinford Christian Centre six months later and settled in Pensnett for three years before returning to Brazil for nine years.

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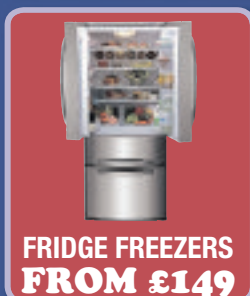
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NEWS in brief

Advice at hand for election hopefuls

AN ADVICE session for would-be candidates hoping to stand in the forthcoming local elections is being held today (Thursday) by Sandwell Council.

Nominations for candidates to stand for Sandwell Council starts on Tuesday, April 8, the day after the public notice advertising the election is published.

Briefing

Anyone considering standing is invited to attend a briefing session about the election process which is being held today at the Sandwell Council House from 12.30pm.

Would-be candidates can collect their nomination packs from the session. The deadline for nominations is April 24.

Bullying off for a very good cause

A CHARITY hockey match is taking place between Wednesbury Hockey Club 1st team and 2nd team to raise money for Macmillan Nurses on Saturday.

The match is in memory of local lad Dean Taylor, from Friar Park, Wednesbury, who lost his battle to cancer at the age of 27.

The team's fees will be donated to the charity and Willenhall Academy have donated the pitch for free.

Tea and coffee will be sold and there will be a bucket available for further donations. Wednesbury Sports Union will be putting on a curry night that evening, courtesy of player Jimmy Singh.

Ten years going straight ends with thief back in jail

A PROLIFIC thief has been jailed for 20 months after watching a couple leave their home and burgling it before they returned an hour later.

Timothy Pearson, who had 11 previous convictions involving 29 separate offences, struck in Blakedown Road, Halesowen on February 26, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

The 41-year-old entered a greenhouse and used sheers and cutters found inside to smash his way into the house, said Mr Philip Beardwell, prosecuting.

Pearson broke the conservatory window and escaped with a TV and DVD player but did not get far before arousing suspicion.

A passer-by saw a man walking down the Hagley Road with something hidden under his coat and decided to tail him, explained Mr Beardwell. Police were alerted after Pearson disappeared into a nearby estate but officers did not manage to track him down until after he had found a buyer for the stolen items.

Mr Beardwell continued: "He said the TV and DVD worth £120 had been sold to a man he would not identify to fund his drug habit."

Mr Rupert Jones, defending, said: "He has an extremely poor criminal record but he had gone straight for ten years as a result of help given to him by the probation service. Then in November of last year he relapsed back into

by Simon Stone

drug use and reoffending. This burglary was committed on impulse."

Pearson, of Snowdon Grove, Halesowen, was also caught shoplifting on November 6 and given a 12 month community sentence that he broke the terms of by committing a similar crime on February 18. Then came the burglary, which was the third time he had been convicted of this type of offence, meaning he faced the prospect of a minimum three year jail term unless there were exceptional circumstances.

Recorder David Crigman QC ruled that the decade Pearson had remained offence free before returning to crime allowed him to impose a lesser sentence.

He explained: "You had previously had jail sentences of four and two and half years for earlier burglaries but these were ten and 14 years ago. This time lag allows me to take an exceptional course. You had been offence free for almost ten years."

Tommy still smiling at the age of 80



Tommy Munden celebrating his 80th birthday with his grandchildren, from left, William, Lucy and Daniel Hickman

HE has entertained many a Black Country man with his tales of life in this proud corner of the country. From the Black Country club circuit to performing in front of thousands at the Symphony Hall, Tommy Munden could always make them laugh.

The popular comedian still kept his family smiling as he recently celebrated his 80th birthday surrounded by his nearest and dearest. The comic said the 'phone hadn't stopped ringing' as friends and fans got in touch to wish him well.

Tommy, who lives in Alexandra Road, Halesowen, was forced to quit the Black Country Night Out circuit in 2012 after being struck with Parkinson's Disease.

Instead of presents the much-loved performer asked family and friends to instead make donations to Stourbridge's Mary Stevens Hospice. He visits the hospice's day centre during the week to give his wife, Val, a break from caring for him.

But while he is no longer giggling, Tommy still manages to make his le-

gion of fans smile. "I was getting out the ambulance recently and someone came up to me. He said that over the years at my shows I had given him a lot of pleasure," he said. "It is wonderful to hear that — to know I have made a contribution."

Tommy celebrated part of his birthday, on Monday at the hospice before returning home for a family tea. He was joined in the celebration by daughter Caroline, son-in-law Aaron and grandchildren Daniel, nine, Lucy, seven, and William, one.

Plans for over 500 homes in the area

A HOUSEBUILDER has announced multi-million plans to build more than 500 homes in the Black Country.

Mar City, whose sales are being helped by the Government's Help to Buy scheme, has bought sites in West Bromwich, Smethwick and Coseley which it plans to transform.

It wants to put 250 family homes on the site at Hall Green Road, West Bromwich. The Birmingham-based firm has also lined up 150 properties at Darkhouse Lane, Coseley, and 143 at Cranford Street, Smethwick. All three sites were previously industrial. The firm has signed contracts for the sites.

The deputy leader of Sandwell Council, Councillor Mahboob Hussain, who has responsibility for housing, said: "These new developments are good news, especially that they are building family homes rather than just apartments."

Councillor Hussain said that affordable homes would be part of the two large scale developments in the Sandwell borough.

He said that the development in West Bromwich took in land that had been sold by the council for development for housing.

"I welcome any new housing being delivered to meet the local housing shortage. There are now hundreds of new houses being built across Sandwell," he added.



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New outdoor gym is a national first for hospital

No contradiction for Paloma city dates



Paloma Faith — concerts at Wolverhampton Civic Hall and at Birmingham's Symphony Hall in November

POP star Paloma Faith is returning to her favourite West Midlands venue, Wolverhampton Civic Hall, as part of her autumn/winter tour.

When the London singer performs in the city on Saturday, November 22, it will mark the third time she has been in concert at the North Street venue.

She is currently in the top ten with her third album, A Perfect Contradiction, and next month releases her latest single, the ballad Only Love Can Hurt Like This.

Symphony

Tickets for her Civic Hall gig range from £30.25 to £38.50 and go on sale tomorrow (Friday) from 9am.

Call Midland Box Office 0870 320 7000 or online at the www.wolvescivic.co.uk website.

Paloma will also be visiting Birmingham, for a concert at the Symphony Hall on Monday, November 10. See www.thsh.co.uk or call 0121 345 0600 for ticket information.

Ten week wait but level crossing finally open again

A LEVEL crossing in Cradley Heath has finally opened after a ten week wait.

Engineers from Network Rail have finished work at the barrier next to Cradley Heath Train Station that was damaged when a van smashed into it in January.

Its re-opening has been welcomed by parents and disabled residents who rely on the crossing to get from one side of the station to another.

For the last two months they have had to travel on to other destinations and get a return journey just to get their final destination.

Posters had been placed around the station during the closure urging wheel-

chair users to: "Travel through Stourbridge Junction and return to Cradley Heath on the next train" in order to get off at the station.

Labour's Parliamentary Candidate for Halesowen and Rowley Regis, Stephanie Peacock, has been campaigning for the crossing to be re-opened. She said: "I am pleased Network Rail bosses in London have finally listened. People in Cradley Heath have waited too long, but at least the matter is now resolved."

Network rail had hoped work on the barriers would take a week, but it was delayed due to problems getting the necessary parts.

AN OUTDOOR gym will be built at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital in a national first as officials aim to beat obesity and help boost the health of heart patients.

Patients, visitors and staff at will be able to use equipment when it is officially opened next month.

Seven outdoor gyms have already been installed around the borough in a bid to improve residents' health.

Treadmills

This is thought to be the first time that such a gym has been created at a hospital, thanks to a link up between health bosses and council officials.

Equipment such as outdoor treadmills and bikes are being fitted this week near to the Action Heart Centre at the hospital, off High Street, Pens-

Report by Andrew Turton

nett. The gym will be targeted for use by people with heart conditions and people referred through Dudley's exercise programme.

These rehabilitation services and referral programmes are run by the Action Heart charity on behalf of Dudley Council's Office of Public Health.

The new facility will be made available to everyone to encourage as many people as possible to enjoy a healthier lifestyle and lose weight.

Dudley Council's public health boss, Councillor Stuart Turner, said: "In Dudley we have a long track record of providing a nationally recognised cardiac rehabilitation service and exercise referral programme."

"This new outdoor equipment will be primarily used to support this work but the equipment will also be available to visitors and other patients."

"We hope it will help raise the pro-

file further of all of the outdoor gyms."

Chief executive at the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust Paula Clark added: "The idea behind having the gym at the hospital is that the service users get trained to use it so that they are confident to carry on using the ones in the community settings."

Obese

Officials at Dudley Council have recently also revealed plans to cut waistlines after it emerged that 15,000 local young people were deemed overweight last year.

Figures suggest that one in five of people in Dudley are obese.

That led to council officials proposing radical new planning guidelines across the borough with fast food outlets no longer allowed to open within 400 metres of school gates.

Two dishonest police officers jailed for theft

TWO West Midlands Police officers have been jailed for theft after being caught in a sting operation by their own force.

Pc Mark Davis and Pc Neil Samuels were told to search an Oldbury home for stolen property and while there stole 800 cigarettes and £20 in cash. But the Sandwell-based response officers were under surveillance by colleagues.

They were arrested and charged with one count each of theft. At Birmingham Magistrates' Court Davis, aged 31, of Clent Road, Oldbury, and Samuels, aged 33, of Croft Lane, Wolverhampton, were both jailed for 20 weeks.

The court heard that after leaving the house, on July 24, the officers then went back to the police

station where they falsified records of the search and witness statements.

District Judge David Robinson told them: "These are serious offences involved a high level of breach of trust. The impact of offences such as this on public confidence is high."

"You did all of this believing or knowing that this would impede a critical investigation, with all of the consequences that might have had for the individual you believed to be in custody and justice."

Earlier defending solicitor Mr Mark Kelly told the court that the two had 'exhibited genuine remorse'.

He said: "It was not premeditated, it was stupid, it does not appear to have been of any significant commercial gain."

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Dexys cover star attends launch of book on the band

THE man captured on the iconic artwork for Dexys Midnight Runners' debut album joined super fan Neil Warburton as he launched his new book on the group.

Anthony O'Shaughnessy was pictured as a boy alongside families who were asked to leave their Belfast homes during the Troubles in 1971.

The photograph captured the impact of the city's strife on families, with the 13-year-old carrying all his belongings in a small suitcase and bag.

Dexys frontman Kevin Rowland would later choose it as the image fronting Searching for the Young Soul Rebels in 1980.

Former Post Office worker Mr

O'Shaughnessy later had the chance to meet the band when they played the Ulster Hall in Belfast. He had seem a six-foot-tall cardboard cut out of himself advertising the gig and told a woman in the ticket office his link to the album artwork. He was later invited backstage and has since met the band several times.

Mr O'Shaughnessy was alongside Mr Warburton signing copies of the latter's book on the group, inspired by his friendship with Kevin Rowland, as they both used to live on Apollo Road in Oldbury. It was where the singer lived when the band topped the charts with Geno.

The book is a compilation of Mr Warburton's fanzine Keep On Running.



Anthony O'Shaughnessy, left, and Neil Warburton at the Dexys book launch in Oldbury

Treasured items stolen in burglary

A GOLD wedding ring, a retirement bracelet watch and an RAF cap are among the sentimental items stolen in a burglary on an elderly couple's home

Thieves made off with the items when they broke through a conservatory window into the house in Hunnington, near Halesowen, on Friday afternoon.

Items stolen included a gold bracelet watch which had been a retirement gift from Oldbury firm Accles and Pollock, inscribed with the company name and the years 1945 to 1970. Also stolen was an RAF cap with badges on it and a nap sack with an RAF number on it.

A Packard Bell laptop, TomTom sat-nav, gold and diamond solitaire engagement ring, a gold band wedding ring, and a pair of cufflinks with two small Spitfire planes and the RAF logo were also taken. Detective Constable Vicky Collier said: "The victims are elderly and very distressed at the loss of items which are irreplaceable."

Police are appealing for information on 0300 333 3000.

Film star is to play the blues at Bilston

ACTION movie star Steven Seagal is bringing his blues band to Bilston for two concerts in the summer.

The American actor, who has made more than 40 films since his debut in 1988, is a bona fide blues musician and his band will include Big Bill Morganfield, son of blues legend Muddy Waters.

The star of Under Siege, On Deadly Ground and Machete will be performing at the Robin 2 on Monday and Tuesday, July 21 and 22.

Robin boss Mike Hamblett said: "We hosted three sensational sold out shows with Steven Seagal back in 2008."

"It is obviously fantastic news that Steven requested to come back to the Robin 2 for two nights with his new all-star blues band as part of a UK tour."

Seagal has been a musician a lot longer than an actor. He got his first guitar at the age of 12 and has been playing the blues ever since. He has honed his craft over the years sharing his love for the blues and jamming with such blues legends as BB King, Bo Diddley, John Lee Hooker and, his greatest influence, Clarence 'Gatemouth' Brown.

Tickets are priced £27.50

By Leon Burakowski

in advance, £30 on the door. Contact www.therobin.co.uk or call (01902) 401211.

Seagal has recently put a statement on his website in response to comments in the US media over his friendship with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who he has described as one of the world's great leaders.

"I am a staunchly proud US citizen," he says in the statement. "I have served as a US police officer for 25 years and put my life at risk on numerous occasions for my country."

"Any discussions I have had with the Russian President have been as a personal friend of mine and for the primary purpose of helping to create a situation where the US and Russia can become better friends and better allies."

Smog warning as Sahara dust falls on region

A HEALTH alert was issued this week as air pollution was expected to rise to dangerous levels as dust blowing in from the Sahara was blamed for the problem.

Smog has moved in across large parts of the country including sections of the Midlands sparking serious health concerns.

Dangerous

The Government says a pollution cloud swept into the country on Tuesday and could prove dangerous for people with serious heart and lung issues.

It is feared the Midlands and the south would be the worst affected, with some areas hitting the highest possible level of 10 on the official warning scale.

Saharan dust is said to be

partly to blame for the air pollution problem, which is being billed as the worst to hit Britain since The Great Smog of 1952.

The dust has been raining down on parts of the country over the past few days, with many people reporting seeing their cars covered in a light red dust.

Strong winds in North Africa has caused the desert sand to sweep up through the country when the gusts are blowing in the right direction.

People have been told to brace themselves for high levels of pollution.

In the West Midlands rain was expected today and cooler weather was forecast for Friday with the weekend is expected to be fine.

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Doomed centre is open longer

OPENING hours at a closure-threatened medical centre have been extended for a second time to ease pressure on accident and emergency services in Dudley.

Health chiefs took the step of extending opening hours at the Walk-In Centre in Holly Hall last November to help A&E services at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital cope during the busy winter months. The centre was supposed to return to its regular hours of 8am to 8pm this Monday.

But officials from the borough's Clinical Commissioning Group have decided to continue with the extended opening hours of 8am to 10pm until June. They said it had been necessary to take the step as patient demand remained high and was expected to increase over the Easter period.

Farewell to the museum's popular volunteer Barbara



Barbara Skeldon

A LOVED and respected former nursery nurse from Tipton who volunteered at Dudley's Black Country Living Museum for many years has died at the age of 78.

Barbara Skeldon was a familiar face at the Tipton Road attraction in the 1980s and '90s as a guide at one of the cottages.

She looked after pigs at the museum, arriving to feed them before

going to work at the Blakeley School in Tividale. Mrs Skeldon would return to the attraction after work to feed them again.

Her husband of 58 years, John, said his wife as someone who always put the needs of others first.

She died at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital on March 16 after suffering a chronic ulcerated leg. Her funeral will take place tomorrow (Friday) at Gornal Wood Crematorium at 2.10pm. Mrs Skeldon leaves her husband,

three children and two grandchildren.

Mr Skeldon, 78, said: "She used to be a guide at one of the cottages at the museum and used to dress up in period clothing and tell visitors what life was like for people at the time."

"She absolutely adored volunteering at the museum. When I have gone back people say they still remember her."

He said: "She was loved and respected and that is the most fitting tribute of all."

Flood of interest in NEC Group

THERE has been a flood of bids and interest from businesses wanting to take on some of Birmingham's top attractions.

Birmingham City Council wants to sell off the NEC Group to boost its coffers. The National Exhibition Centre itself and LG Arena are likely to be sold on a 50-year lease with the National Indoor Arena and International Convention Centre in the city centre on a 25-year one.

Council leader Sir Albert Bore said there had been a 'high interest' from investors in the leasehold sale announced last month. The sale came as the city council tries to cope with £1 billion of debts from equal pay claims. The council has stressed it wants the current use of the 38-year-old exhibition centre, ICC and arenas preserved. Officers are now drawing up a shortlist.

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Youngsters leaping into action for charity



The 24-hour trampolining session at Leasowes High School

SPORTY youngsters ran, jumped and danced to show they were fit for the task of raising money for charity.

Children from Leasowes High School and Halesowen CoFE Primary School were among those raising money for Sport Relief last week.

At Leasowes School, a 24-hour trampolining marathon took place. Pupils began jumping at 11am and saw it through until 4pm before members of the Air Dynamix Trampolining Squad took over at their school headquarters.

Squad members jumped through the night until the event ended at 11am the next day. Claire Riches, aged 22, and Laura Stevens, 17, carried on without sleep.

The primary school, in High Street, raised around £200 through a Zumba session, dance-a-thon and a mile-long run.

Pupils started with the Zumba session held in the school hall during the morning. Youngsters then took part in the dance-a-thon during their lunch-break with more than 120 pupils involved.

Best foot forward for the Dudley Trail

WALKERS have the opportunity to discover hidden gems during this year's Dudley Trail. The event attracts thousands of people and is now in its 34th year. Routes for six, nine, 12, 18 and 26 miles are on offer as part of the annual walking extravaganza on May 4.

People can walk at their own pace along canal towpaths, disused railway lines, country paths and a few roads. They all start at Dudley Leisure Centre at designated times between 8am and noon. The event is part of the annual Dudley Walking Festival from April 19 to May 4.

Everyone who completes a trail receives a certificate. It will cost £3 per person to join the 26 and 18 mile routes, £2.50 for 12 and nine miles and £1.50 to walk the six mile route. An additional 50p will be charged for entries on the day. Entry forms are available from Dudley Council leisure centres and libraries or call (01384) 817817. Forms can be downloaded from www.dudley.gov.uk/himleyhall

Rising star Cici is taking the lead

Cici Howells began acting at school in Wales and now has a star role on stage in Birmingham

ACTOR and singer Cici Howells is taking the starring role in a production of The Threepenny Opera, by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill, at The Birmingham Rep until April 12.

The 23-year-old performer from Powys, Wales, trained at The Musical Theatre Academy London and is an accomplished musician and winner of the inaugural Richard Williams Musical Theatre Award.

Her credits include *Witches Of Eastwick* (Watermill Theatre, Newbury); *Carnaby Street The Musical*; *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Watermill Theatre, Newbury); *A Night of Anderson and Pett*, (Delfont Rooms); *An Evening With Chris Passey and Friends* (Leicester Square Lounge Theatre); *Macmillan Gala* (London Palladium) and Julie Atherton's *No Space* for Air album launch.

Highlight

Her lead role of Polly in Pete Rowes' production of *The Threepenny Opera* stands out as a career highlight.

"It's been an amazing journey to get to play my first role."

"I started out at Welshpool High School and I've been a keen musician and actor since then."

"I went to Shrewsbury and trained at Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology for two years then auditioned for the MTA in London and got in."

"I graduated early from MTA, in 2012, and my first production was *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. Since then, I've only had five weeks out of work."

Cici's success owes much to hard work, also to her parents.

"My mum and dad are very, very supportive. I've always known that I've



First big role – Cici Howells on stage at the Birmingham Rep

wanted to perform. All my life I've been doing my own songs and performing them."

For now, Cici's thoughts are focused on *The Threepenny Opera*. "There are 21 of us in the cast and there are 40 instruments on stage. The reviews have been brilliant," she said.

The Threepenny Opera is a musical comedy set in a world where the law is fickle and lowly souls remain on the poverty line.

The action is set against the backdrop of Kurt Weill's music, played live on stage by the actors themselves.

It includes songs such as *Mac the Knife* and *Pirate Jenny*. Audiences can

expect a raucous night. Cici adds: "The show is a riot."

"I've only ever had about two lines in previous roles and now I'm in the lead role and I'm doing it every night. It's brilliant, I love it."

Cici has a number of idols, — Maggie Smith, Judi Dench and Meryl Streep — but she doesn't look like any of them.

"I'm plastered in tattoos," she says. "My whole arm is tattooed and so are my ribs, stomach, thighs, feet and shoulder."

"I got my first tattoo when I was 18. I go to the same tattooist, in Llanidloes. I'm a rebel and a rock chick."

ANDY RICHARDSON

Exploration of war stories that never end

The Two Worlds of Charlie F, Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton
BADLY wounded, these soldiers may have left the war zone but the war will probably never leave them.

Back home with their loved ones, who have waited and prayed for their safe return, the battle goes on—in their heads. The nightmares, sleepless nights and other horrors were laid bare in *The Two Worlds of Charlie F*.

Superbly performed partly by the

wounded soldiers themselves, some of whom have lost limbs, it brought home the harsh reality of war.

Yet for all this there were some lighter moments, when they spoke about the comradeship in their 'forces family' and about the delight when those letters arrived from loved ones — but anguish when one soldier got the Dear John letter from a girlfriend who could wait no longer.

This poignant, emotive, hard-hitting

play was played out by people who really know what it is like and they took us all on a long, and often painful, eye-opening journey with them.

Cassidy Little, who played Charlie F, was faultless. All of them felt this experience had helped them on their long road to recovery.

This award-winning play is an authentic tale of survival and richly deserved the long standing ovation.

SUE ATTWATER

No buzz for talent showcase

NME Awards Tour, The Institute, Birmingham
THE music paper's package tour, usually a great way to see rising talent, hasn't really got a buzz going this year, as indicated by the move to a smaller venue.

The inclusion of old hands Interpol to boost audience numbers demonstrated a lack of faith in the up-and-coming bands. The gloomy New York group's mature fans turned up late, meaning the venue filled up after some of the younger talent had performed. That was a shame because all three deserved to be listened too.

Circa Waves had great energy and a weaving guitar sound hinting at African pop. Dynamic duo Royal Blood after an odd start — "Hello Nottingham" — cranked up an almighty bluesy, heavy rock sound. Think White Stripes meet Nirvana with volume at 11. Temples created a Marc Bolan flashback for this ageing reviewer — it was singer James Bagshaw's corkscrew hair and cosmic boogie riffs. Their psychedelic pop was spellbinding.

LEON BURAKOWSKI

Reviews



Macheath's wives catch him in The Threepenny Opera

Rude and riotous opera in your face

The Threepenny Opera, Birmingham Rep

RUDE, noisy and in your face. This flawed, sprawling, exuberant and gleefully subversive production is a refreshing experience.

John Gay's 1728 ballad was reinterpreted by Marxist playwright Bertolt Brecht in the 1920s and now for the 21st century by Robert David MacDonald and Jeremy Sams. Lyrics refer to paedophile TV celebrities, alongside corrupt cops and greedy capitalists.

Set in a whitewashed warehouse, this charts the downfall of the gangster Ma-

cheath (as in Mac the Knife) against the backdrop of the coronation of King Charles the... his title on the graffiti rhymes with third. It features an excellent cast of able-bodied and disabled actor/musicians.

Milton Lopes as Macheath is charming but lacks menace. The female characters shine with the powerful voices of Victoria Oruwi, Amelia Cavallo and Cici Howells. Georgian London or Benefits Street, the message is the same — society will demonise the poor.

Continues to April 12. Not for the easily offended. LB

Small in stature but big in noise

Tinie Tempah, Civic Hall, Wolverhampton

"HE'S done more songs than you think," observed one concert-goer. They're not wrong.

A quick look at Tinie Tempah's discography shows collaborations with Labrinth, Ellie Goulding, Calvin Harris, Wiz Kalifa and John Martin.

Lover Not A Fighter and Frisky immediately had the crowd dancing in the aisles. Still the hits came as Tinie gave a Demonstration of his talent with numbers from his second album and debut *Disc-Overy*.

Wonderman, Earthquake, Trampoline, Children of the Sun and Sky Sports' soundtrack *Written In The Stars* followed, along with Miami 2 Ibiza and *Drinking From The Bottle* before the number one smash *Tsunami*.

He may be small in stature but he's big on noise. For the massed ranks, Wolverhampton was the only place to be — and they were in fine voice even before the final encore track gave them their Pass Out.

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Iceland – Reykjavík and the Northern Lights

Four days various departure dates



The Presidential Residence at Bessastaðir, the fishing town of Hafnarfjörður, the Houses of Parliament, Lutheran Cathedral and Iceland's tallest and most memorable building, Hallgrím's Church, are also taken in during the tour.

Perhaps the highlight of the break will be the trip out of the city in search of a sighting of the Aurora Borealis. Truly awe-inspiring, the Northern Lights, should they be seen, are a never-to-be forgotten sight.

Please note the Northern Lights are a natural phenomenon and sightings cannot be guaranteed.

★ **PRICE FROM £519**

Enjoy a break with a difference, as you fly to the 'Land of fire and ice' to discover and explore one of Europe's most surprising, welcoming and most happening cities.

Iceland is a place where all the earth's natural power and beauty are revealed in smouldering volcanoes, plunging waterfalls, bubbling thermal pools, spouting geysers and distant glaciers – all within a short drive of Reykjavík.

The included guided city tour is the ideal way to get acquainted with Reykjavík. Amongst the highlights will be the 'Pearl', a collection of disused water tanks now crowned with a glass dome and converted into a conference centre. Here there is also a viewing platform looking out over the city and harbour beyond.

INFO

- Return flights
- Three nights bed and breakfast accommodation in a choice of hotels
- City tour of Reykjavík
- Search for the Northern Lights tour
- Optional excursions offered
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by
Newmarket Holidays (ABTA V7812, ATOL 2325)

British Grand Prix

Day trip departing July 6

★ **PRICE FROM £199.95**

- Return coach travel with an early start (2-4 am) to arrive at Silverstone by 6.30 am
- One-day General Admission ticket to the British Grand Prix (upgrades available on request)
- Services of a coach driver/tour representative

Organised by Omega Events (ABTA Y590X)

Ladies day at Royal Ascot

Two days departing June 18

★ **PRICE FROM £139**

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Entrance to the Silver Ring at Royal Ascot (upgrade offered)
- Visit to Windsor
- Services of a tour driver
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Scarborough, Whitby and York

Four days departing June 20

★ **PRICE FROM £209**

- Return coach travel
- Three nights half-board accommodation
- Visits to Scarborough, Whitby, York and Harrogate
- Optional North York Moors Railway excursion offered
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Yorkshire Cruise and Steam

Three days departing June 6, September 26

★ **PRICE FROM £169**

- Return coach travel
- Two nights half-board accommodation
- Cruise on the Leeds Liverpool Canal
- Journey on the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway
- Coach tour of the Yorkshire Dales
- Visits to Holmfirth, Skipton, Grassington and Harworth
- Services of a tour driver
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

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London Eye and Thames River Cruise

Two days departing Jun 7, Jul 5, Aug 2, Aug 30, Sept 27, Oct 25, Nov 22, Dec 13

★ **PRICE FROM £139.95**

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation at a four-star outer London hotel
- Flight on the London Eye
- Cruise on the River Thames
- Free time in London
- Services of a coach driver/tour representative
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Omega Short Breaks (ABTA Y5914)

Haworth 1940's Weekend

Two days departing May 17

★ **PRICE FROM £89.95**

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Visits to York and Haworth
- Services of a tour driver
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Chelsea Flower Show and Windsor

Two days departing May 23

★ **PRICE FROM £179.95**

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Admission to the Chelsea Flower Show
- Visit to Windsor
- Services of coach driver/tour representative
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Omega Events (ABTA Y590X)

Tour de France London 2014

Two days departing July 6

★ **PRICE FROM £85**

- Return coach travel
- Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation
- Viewing access to the Tour de France
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Promotions (ABTA V787X)

André Rieu and the Johann Strauss Orchestra in Maastricht

Three days departing July 11, 17 and 19

★ **PRICE FROM £259**

- Return coach and Channel crossings
- Two nights bed and breakfast accommodation
- Seated ticket to see André Rieu and the Johann Strauss Orchestra in Maastricht, his hometown in The Netherlands (upgrades offered)
- Visit to Maastricht
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Promotions (ABTA V787X)

Prague

Four days various departure dates

★ **PRICE FROM £389**

- Return flights
- Three nights bed and breakfast accommodation
- Guided tour of medieval Prague
- Guided tour of Prague's castle district
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)

Pompeii, Capri and the Bay of Naples

Eight days various departure dates

★ **PRICE FROM £799**

- Return flights
 - Seven nights half-board accommodation
 - Guided tours of Pompeii and Sorrento
 - Visits to Naples and Ravello
 - Cruise to Capri
 - Visit to the volcano of Vesuvius
 - Tour of the Amalfi coast
 - Services of a tour manager
 - Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies
- Certain entrance fees payable locally

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)



Bad boy Brand and a Grand dame

THE comedy scene this week is dominated by Miranda Hart with a gig at the LG Arena tomorrow night followed by a residency at the NIA from Tuesday to Thursday. She's not the only comic visiting Birmingham with bad boy Russell Brand bringing his Messiah Complex World Tour to the Hippodrome on Sunday and Radio 4 regular Lucy Porter at the Glee Club tomorrow night.

Grand panto dame Ceri Dupree returns to the Wolverhampton theatre on Sunday with a faaaabulous one-nighter. Eddy Brimson features at the Laugh Out Loud Comedy Club at the Slade Rooms tomorrow and Xtra Factor co-host Matt Richardson is at the same venue on Sunday night.

Learned folk as academic has gig

AWARD-WINNING musician and academic Fay Hield and the Hurricane Party featuring Sam Sweeney, Andy Cutting, Rob Harbon and Roger Wilson will be playing at the Guild Hall, Lichfield, on Sunday. Tickets are £14, £12.60 members and £7 under-16s. Call the box office on 01543 262223. Fay, as part of the award-winning folk group The Full English, will be playing at Shrewsbury Folk Festival on August 25. Phil Beer, half of Show of Hands, will play at Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge, on April 24. £12 on the door.

Elbow anthems, Quo riffs and the return of the Manics

Theatre's night of Evita stars

ANDREW Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's blockbuster Evita returns to Birmingham Hippodrome in Bill Kenwright's revival with former Wet Wet Wet star Marti Pellow as revolutionary Che Guevara.

Dictator Juan Peron's wife Eva will be played by powerful Portuguese leading lady Madalena Alberto. Expect a memorable Don't Cry For Me Argentina. Evita is at the Hippodrome from Tuesday, April 8, to Saturday, April 19.

A faithful staging of Leonard Bernstein's West Side Story is set in 50s New York at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre until April 19. Brass bands feature in miners' strike drama with music Brassed Off at Wolverhampton Grand from Tuesday to the following Saturday, April 12. Birmingham Rep's rollicking Threepenny Opera continues until April 12.



Marti Pellow and Madalena Alberto star in Evita

MASTERS of majestic melodic melancholy Elbow have secured their position as one of Britain's best loved bands and one of the few with songs really big enough to warrant a stadium singalong.

The former Ramsbottom pub band, who won Brit and Mercury prize nominations with their debut Asleep in the Back in 2001, recently released their sixth album The Take Off and Landing of Everything and have a gig at Birmingham's National Indoor Arena on Saturday night.

Lead singer Bury-born Guy Garvey, who also presents his own BBC Radio 6 show, will no doubt call upon a back catalogue that includes such anthems as One Day Like This, a song chosen to close London's 2012 Olympics, and Open Arms.

Elbow finally won the Mercury Prize in 2008 with The Seldom Seen Kid.

Support at their Birmingham concert will be a solo spot by Doves frontman Jimi Goodwin, who last week released his solo debut album Odludek.

Rock veterans Status Quo have a poignant twist to their concerts at Wolverhampton Civic Hall tonight (Thursday) and next Thursday. The Frantic Four of Francis Rossi, Rick Parfitt, Alan Lancaster and John Coghlan will be supported by ex-Dr Feelgood guitarist Wilko Johnson. The terminally ill guitar legend from Canvey Island is enjoying the biggest success of his career with his collaboration album with The Who's Roger Daltrey, Going Back Home.

Hard rock Northern Irish trio Therapy? mark 20 years since their breakthrough album Troublelegum tomorrow at the Wulfrun Hall.

That's the same night that the surviving members of Ian Dury's band The Blockheads bring their Brit funk sound to the Robin 2 in Bilston to celebrate 35 years since Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick.

Welsh rockers Manic Street Preachers have sold out their gig at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Sunday. Strictly Come Dancing pop star Sophie Ellis-Bextor is at the In-



Elbow ready to bring melodic melancholy

stitute in Digbeth on Monday. Gary Barlow will be playing his solo and Take That songs at the LG Arena on Tuesday and returns with his Since I Saw You Last tour on Saturday, April 19.

Mancunian punk veterans The Buzzcocks, whose Ever Fallen In Love must rate as one of the greatest pop songs, play the Robin 2 next Thursday.

The biggest musical event of next weekend will be the arrival of JT, as US star Justin Timberlake comes to Birmingham for concerts at the LG Arena on Friday and Saturday, April 11 and 12.

Wireless has an R&B star line-up

THE V Festival has a West Midlands rival. Like August's V, Wireless Festival will swap line-ups over two location but, unlike its rival, will be in cities - Birmingham's Perry Park and London's Finsbury Park. Wireless, on the July 4 to 6 weekend, has an R&B bias.

On Friday, Drake tops the bill, support includes Rudimental and Wiz Khalifa; on Saturday Bruno Mars headlines and acts include Ellie Goulding, John Newman, Clean Bandit, Beakley's Becky Hill, the return of Outkast and Salt-N-Pepa; on Sunday Kanye West closes the festival with Happy chart-topper Pharrell Williams.

Day and weekend tickets are available, see www.wirelessfestival.co.uk

Lunar offering alternative fest

A BOUTIQUE festival specialising in alternative music, from psychedelic rock to weird folk, is arriving in Warwickshire.

The Lunar Festival is at the Umberslade Estate, Tanworth-in-Arden, five miles from M42 Junction 3.

The line-up on the June 6-8 weekend includes: Friday, British Sea Power, former Charlatans frontman Tim Burgess and Toy; Saturday, 60s star Donovan and Temples; Sunday, ex-Captain Beefheart musicians The Magic Band and only the Midlands date for Texan outfit The Polyphonic Spree. See lunarfestival.co.uk for details.


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CHOICE



The Voice UK: The Live Final (BBC1, 7pm)
This is it, folks. Kylie Minogue has cried all the tears that count, and will.i.am has stalled in his decision-making all that he'll be allowed – yep, they and fellow coaches Ricky Wilson and Sir Tom Jones have done everything they can to get their acts to the final. But now it's entirely out of their control, and here's where for one of them, all that hard work and emotional turmoil will pay off, as a winner is crowned. Each artist will perform a song of their choice, followed by an exclusive duet with their coach. The votes in so far will then be counted, and four will become three, as the one with the lowest score is given the elbow. Appearances from Paloma Faith and Aloe Blacc will temporarily ease the tension.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. 10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live. 11.30 Mary Berry Cooks. (R) 12.00 BBC News; Regional News; Weather. 12.10 Football Focus. 1.00 Live Davis Cup Tennis: Italy v Great Britain. 4.30 Final Score. 5.15 Film: Shrek 2 (2004) Animated adventure sequel, with the voice of Mike Myers. 6.40 BBC News; Regional News; Weather. 7.00 **The Voice UK: The Live Final.** After seven weeks of blind auditions, two battle shows, two knockout rounds and two live programmes, the final is here – with just four contestants remaining, all eager to be crowned winner and pick up a recording contract. Emma Willis and Marvin Humes present as Christina Maria, Jamie, Jermain and Sally perform a song of their own choice and then duet with their coaches, after which the singer with the fewest votes leaves the competition. The remaining three then get their final chance to prove they deserve the title with one more number, and while the public votes, the coaches perform together one last time. There will also be appearances from Paloma Faith and Aloe Blacc, and then it's the moment of truth for the hopefuls as they find out who has been voted The Voice UK 2014. Last in the series. 9.05 **The National Lottery Live.** I'm a Celebrity champion and former Westlife singer Kian Egan provides the music as Kate Garraway announces the results of the Lotto and the Thunderball draws. 9.15 **Casualty.** Connie, Zoe and Lily pull together to treat a father and his daughter, which proves easier said than done as the girl suffers from ADHD, while Charlie helps an old biker come to terms with his wife's dementia. Hospital drama. Starring Amanda Mealing, Sunetra Sarker and Derek Thompson. 10.05 BBC News; Weather. 10.25 **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League clashes, including Manchester City v Southampton and Cardiff City v Crystal Palace; National Lottery Update. 11.50 **The Football League Show.** Manish Bhasin presents highlights and all the goals from today's fixtures in the Championship, League One and League Two. 11.10 Weatherview. 1.15 BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 Film: The Saint in London. (1939) 7.05 **Film:** On Moonlight Bay. (1951) 8.40 The Living Planet. (R) 9.35 The Living Planet. (R) 10.30 Fred Dibnah's Made in Britain. (R) 11.30 Great British Railway Journeys. (R) 12.00 James Martin: Home Comforts. 12.45 Live Women's International Football. England v Montenegro (Kick-off 12.55pm). 3.00 **Film:** The Glass Bottom Boat. (1966) Romantic comedy, starring Doris Day and Rod Taylor. 4.45 Mountain Gorilla. (R) 5.45 Collectaholics. (R) 6.45 **Flag It!** People in Colchester, Essex, bring items to be valued before selling them at auction, including a glass vase bought for £1 in a charity shop. (R) 7.30 **Dad's Army.** Mainwaring sets up an observation post in the local lighthouse and annoys the ARP warden by flooding the whole town with light during an air raid. (R) 8.00 **The Plantagenets.** Robert Bartlett charts the events that led to the dynasty's downfall, with four kings being violently deposed in the reign of the Plantagenets' reign. Last in the series. (R) 9.00 **Formula 1: Bahrain Grand Prix Qualifying Highlights.** Suzi Perry introduces action from the session in the third round of the season at the Bahrain International Circuit in Sakhir. Nico Rosberg qualified on pole here last year, and the Mercedes driver is expected to be among the leading contenders for maximum points after a promising start to the campaign that sees him lead the drivers' championship. With commentary by Ben Edwards and David Coulthard. 10.15 **Stewart Lee's Comedy Vehicle.** The comedian explores the topic of marriage in stand-up routines, interspersed with Chris Morris grilling him about his ideas and ending with a short film. Last in the series. 10.45 **QI XL.** Extended edition. Stephen Fry finds out how much Greg Proops, David O'Doherty, Reginald D Hunter and regular panellist Alan Davies know about jungles. 11.30 **Film: Welcome to Collinwood.** (2002) Five bungling crooks find their tangled personal lives getting in the way of pulling off a robbery. Crime comedy remake, starring Sam Rockwell, William H Macy and George Clooney. 12.50 **Film:** Beauty & the Briefcase. (2010) 2.15 This is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Dino Dan. 6.10 Dino Dan. (R) 6.25 Matt Hatter Chronicles. (R) 6.50 Canimals. (R) 7.00 Canimals. (R) 7.05 Canimals. (R) 7.10 Om Nom Stories. (R) 7.15 Sooty. (R) 7.30 Scrambled! 9.25 Murder: She Wrote. (R) 10.20 Dinner Date. (R) 11.20 ITV News; Weather. 11.30 The Crocodile Hunter: Diaries. (R) 12.30 **Film:** Twins. (1988) Comedy, with Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito. 2.30 The Chase. (R) 3.30 Midsummer Murders. (R) 5.30 Regional Programme. 5.40 ITV News; Weather. 6.00 **You've Been Framed! Presents.** Comedy from the mind of Harry Hill, inspired by viewers' home videos. Showcased in this edition are some of the narrator's most absurd thoughts on a variety of subjects, from the population of Gibraltar to an opinionated foetus. 7.00 **Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway.** The Georgie duo go head to head in their most daring round of Ant v Dec to date as the entertainment show goes out with a bang, and Robbie Williams joins in the fun, taking part in a performance at the end of the programme. Another mystery celebrity features in the live sing-along, all the winners of Place on the Plane jet off to Florida, and a member of the studio audience plays to win the items advertised in one of last week's commercial breaks. Last in the series. 8.25 **The Cube.** A telecoms trainer and a student nurse face up to seven trials of skill, dexterity, reaction, wit and wisdom in the hope of winning a jackpot of £250,000. Phillip Schofield hosts. 9.25 **Law & Order: UK.** The hunt for the killer of a seemingly innocent family man brings Ronnie into contact with his old boss, former DI Natalie Chandler, whose father is accused of the crime. (R) 10.25 **The Americans.** Claudia hands the spies two assignments – Philip is told to monitor a Soviet defector, and Elizabeth must try to get information from a naval recruit about the Connors' 11.25 ITV News; Weather. 11.40 **Through the Keyhole.** Jonathan Ross and Denise Van Outen join Dave Berry on the panel as Keith Lemon visits three mystery homes and challenges them to guess the identities of the famous occupants. 12.40 Jackpot247. 3.10 In Plain Sight. (R) 3.45 ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The Hoobs. (R) 6.35 The Hoobs. (R) 7.00 Trans World Sport. 8.00 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.30 Frasier. (R) 9.00 The Morning Line. 10.00 Weekend Brunch – From the Grand National. 1.00 The Grand National. Live coverage of the world's most famous steeplechase at Aintree. 5.15 Fifteen to One. 6.15 **Channel 4 News.** 6.35 **Lent Diaries.** New series. In the run-up to Easter, this series of short films provides an insight into the lives of people who worship in Britain's West African churches. 6.40 **Gadget Man.** Richard Ayodea embarks on a luxury camping trip with actor Stephen Mangan, trying out the world's biggest penknife, a unique tent and the latest in virtual reality. (R) 7.10 **Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.** Coulson goes on the attack to save a gravely injured Skye by enlisting the aid of Ward's former senior officer John Garrett (guest star Bill Paxton). In the process he uncovers some shocking truths about S.H.I.E.L.D and his own life. Clark Gregg stars in the fantasy adventure. (R) 8.05 **Hostages.** Ellen reveals to Duncan that she will not kill the president, but offers to help him obtain the bone marrow he needs to save his wife, as long as he provides something in return – a promise to protect her children. However, Nina is furious about her husband's plan and becomes determined to thwart him. Toni Collette, Dylan McDermott and Frankie Swift star in the US drama. 9.00 **Film: Colombiana.** (2011) Premiere. A 10-year-old Colombian girl witnesses the murder of her parents at the hands of gangsters, but is rescued by her uncle, who takes her to the US and raises her to be a cold-blooded killer. Years later, she is still working for him as an assassin, but is secretly planning to avenge her parents' deaths. Action thriller, starring Zoe Saldana. 11.10 **Film: The Guard.** (2011) Premiere. A laidback Irish policeman finds his simple life disrupted by a drug-smuggling operation and an uptight FBI agent. Comedy thriller, with Brendan Gleeson. 1.05 **Film:** Hard Eight. (1996) 2.45 Holyoaks. (R) 4.50 Deal or No Deal. (R) 5.45 SuperScribers. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! 10.00 Meerkat Manor. (R) 10.30 The Nightmarer Neighbour Next Door. (R) 11.30 Hercules the Human Bear. (R) 12.30 **Film:** McBride: Anybody Here Murder Marty? (2005) Mystery, starring John Larroquette. 2.10 **Film:** Columbo: Mind Over Mayhem. (1974) Detective drama, with Peter Falk. 3.45 **Film:** Columbo: Dagger of the Mind. (1972) Detective drama, starring Peter Falk and Honor Blackman. 5.40 **Film:** Jesse Stone: Death in Paradise. (2006) Crime drama sequel, starring Tom Selleck. 7.15 **Longmire.** Walt and Vic are called to the scene of a barn fire that has claimed the lives of a string of prize horses and one man, believed to be breeder Ray Stewart. The evidence suggests he committed suicide after setting the building alight, but his wife Alice admits that before she met him her husband was involved with the Mob and had assumed a new identity to escape them. Crime drama, starring Robert Taylor. 8.05 **NCIS.** Tony travels to North Africa on the trail of missing agent Ziva, who is thought to have been tracking down a terrorist leader called Saleem Ulman. Intent on exacting revenge for her apparent death during a flight to Somalia, he is taken hostage by militants and discovers she is still alive – only to be given a potentially catastrophic ultimatum. Starring Mark Harmon and Cote de Pablo. (R) 9.00 5 News Weekend. 9.05 **Most Shocking Moments in Pop.** A countdown focusing on outrageous events and scandals from the pop world, from unbelievable antics and ferocious feuds, to break-ups, meltdowns and untimely deaths. Featuring Miley Cyrus's performance at the 2013 Video Music Awards, Britney Spears shaving her head, teen heart-throb Justin Bieber relieving himself into a bucket while at a restaurant and Kanye West storming onto the stage at the 2009 VMAs while Taylor Swift was picking up an award. 12.00 SuperCasino. Live interactive gaming. 3.10 **Comed.** Fleeced and Left for Broke. (R) 4.00 Wildlife SOS. (R) 4.20 Make It Big. (R) 4.50 The Funky Valley Show. (R) 5.00 Angels of Jarm. (R) 5.05 Roary the Racing Car. (R) 5.20 Angels of Jarm. (R) 5.25 The Funky Valley Show. (R) 5.40 Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Great TV Mistakes 7.30 Doctor Who 8.20 Top Gear 9.20 **Film:** Tropic Thunder (2008) 11.00 Family Guy 12.50 Bluestone 42 3.50 Great TV Mistakes 4.00 Close
BBC Four
7.00 Wild Wales 8.00 Chemistry – A Volatile History 9.00 Inspector De Luca 10.50 Jet! When Britain Ruled the Seas (2008) 11.00 The Pops: 1979 13.00 Sounds of the 70s 2 Punk – Anarchy on the BBC 2.00 Chemistry – A Volatile History 3.00 Wild Wales 4.00 Close
ITV2
12.55 The Only Way Is Essex 2.30 You've Been Framed! 3.00 **Film:** Kangaroo Jack (2003) 4.45 Britain's Got More Talent: Most Amazing Moments 5.50 **Film:** Two Weeks Notice (2002) 7.55 **Film:** The Incredible Hulk (2008) 10.00 Celebrity Juice 10.50 Crazy Beaches 11.20 **Film:** The Faculty (1998) 1.25 Fake Reaction 2.05 Dads 2.25 You've Been Framed! 2.50 Teleshopping 5.50 ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
12.05 Agatha Christie's Marple 2.10 **Film:** Out of Africa (1985) 5.20 Foyle's War 7.20 Rosemary & Thyme 8.25 Doc Martin 9.25 Joanna Lumley's Greek Odyssey 10.30 Cold Blood II 12.05 A Touch of Frost 2.05 Judge Judy 2.25 ITV3 Nightscreen 2.30 Teleshopping
ITV4
3.15 British Touring Car Championship Highlights 4.50 **Film:** Where Eagles Dare (1969) 8.00 Ali: Still the Greatest 9.00 **Film:** Mars Attacks! (1996) 11.10 **Film:** Bowfinger (1999) 1.10 Benidorm 2.05 The Professionals 3.00 The Store
E4
2.00 The Big Bang Theory 3.00 Come Dine with Me: Made in Chelsea Special (2011) 6.55 Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian (2009) 9.00 Devil (2010) Five strangers trapped in a lift realise that one of them is the Devil come to harvest souls, but do not know which one. Horror, starring Chris Messina and Bokeem Woodbine. 10.35 The Divide (2011) 12.50 The Fountain (2006) 2.50 Close

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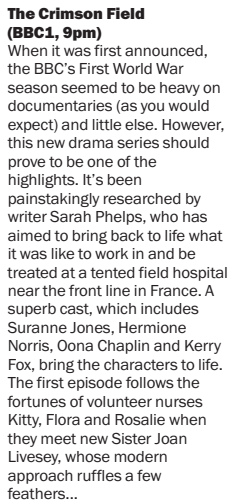
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DIGITAL



11.30 The Graham Norton Show. (R)
12.15 Film: Jacknife. (1989) **1.55**
 Weatherview **2.00** BBC News.

1.40 Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **2.35**
Holby City. (R) **3.35** Silk. (R) **4.35** This Is
BBC Two.

12.15 The Store. **2.15** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **3.45** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

1.40 The Good Wife. (R) **2.25** The Hotel.
(R) **3.20** Secret Removers. (R) **4.15**
SuperScrimpers. (R) **4.40** Deal or No
Deal. (R) **5.35** Kirstie's Handmade
Treasures. (R) **5.50** Deal or No Deal. (R)

Make It Big. (R) **4.50** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.10** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

release of a convicted drug baron. Action thriller sequel, starring Bruce Willis and Bonnie Bedelia. **11.20**
Submarine (2010) **1.10** Ikiru (1952)
4.00 Close

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 <p>NIRVANA</p> <p>18 MAY 14</p>	 <p>NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK</p> <p>31 MAY 14</p>	 <p>ROBBIE WILLIAMS</p> <p>5 & 6 JUL 14</p>
 <p>LEE EVANS</p> <p>MONSIEUR ERS</p> <p>17 - 21 SEP 14</p>	 <p>IL DIVO</p> <p>18 OCT 14</p>	 <p>Ed Sheeran</p> <p>19 - 20 OCT 14</p>
 <p>JOHN BISHOP</p> <p>7 - 9 NOV 14</p>	 <p>THE FIRM</p> <p>5 DEC 14</p>	 <p>Gardeners' World LIVE</p> <p>12 - 15 JUN 14</p>




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Film Choices

MONDAY
Columbo: The Most Dangerous Match, Channel 5, 3.20pm
An American chess champion fears he is about to be beaten by a superior player from Russia, and decides the only sure-fire way he can avoid defeat is by murdering his opponent. Detective drama, starring Peter Falk, Laurence Harvey and Jack Kruschen. (1973)

TUESDAY
The Box, BBC1, 11.20pm
A couple are given a mysterious wooden box with a button on it and told that if they press it, they will be given a million dollars but that someone somewhere in the world will die. After pressing the button, they fear they may be the next victim when the box is passed on, and try to find out how and why this is happening. Sci-fi thriller, with Cameron Diaz and James Marsden. (2008)

WEDNESDAY
Employee of the Month, Channel 4, 12.35am
A lazy shelf stacker suddenly finds the motivation for hard work when he becomes smitten with a new cashier who only dates men who have been awarded employee of the month. However, he faces stiff competition for both the title and the girl in the shape of an ambitious checkout attendant. Comedy, starring Dane Cook, Dax Shepard and Jessica Simpson. (2006)



The Box, Tuesday, BBC1, 11.20pm

THURSDAY
The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas, BBC2, 9pm
Bruno, a boy in Nazi Germany, moves to the country when his father is placed in charge of a concentration camp. While exploring the woods close to the facility's boundary, he spots a Jewish youngster being held there, and the two become friends – but Bruno remains innocently oblivious to the camp's true purpose. Drama, starring David Thewlis and Jack Scanlon. (2008)

FRIDAY
The Bourne Identity, ITV, 10.35pm
A fishing boat crew plucks a man out of the sea with two bullet wounds in his back and a safe-deposit number sewn into his skin – but absolutely no memory of who he is or how he got there. In the search for his true identity, he is pursued by assassins – but his skill at evading them suggest his own past is far from straightforward. Thriller, starring Matt Damon. (2002)

Shooting Dogs, BBC2, 12.05am
Drama set against the backdrop of the Rwandan genocide. Two Englishmen – one an idealistic teacher, the other a world-weary priest – must decide whether to flee to safety or stay and help the Tutsi refugees who have taken shelter from the Hutu in a local school. Starring John Hurt and Hugh Dancy. (2006)

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Pick of the Week

A new take on caring upsets the old guard

When it was first announced, the BBC's First World War season seemed to be heavy on documentaries (as you would expect) and little else.

However, this new drama series should prove to be one of the highlights.

It's been painstakingly researched by writer Sarah Phelps, who has aimed to bring back to life what it was like to work in and be treated at a tented field hospital near the front line in France.

"I hope viewers get a sense of the scale of the war, and that it comes from it from a slightly different perspective," says Phelps. "Not at the Front, we are further back, but nonetheless this is where men were healed and put back together again, or not, and there's a real sense of being at the cutting edge of life and death."

The writer, who previous worked with executive producer Anne Pivovc on an adaptation of Great Expectations, took the book The Roses of No Man's Land by Lyn MacDonald as a starting point before embarking on further reading.

"I am amazed at the stuff I never knew, especially about the medical and the surgical and the nursing aspects," she reveals.

"I found looking at contemporary photographs at the time – cameras were banned at the Front but people sneaked them through and took all sorts of pictures – they tell an incredible story."

She adds: "One of my favourite bits and the most resonant for me was an ad hoc journal that had been typed up, and it was memories of hospital..."

"This tiny little description of the sound of a young volunteer girl from a sheltered background in England, who was now standing in a tented ward somewhere in France, whisking egg whites with a fork, to feed to a man whose face had been blown off – the sound of her fork against the side of the bowl – that's an image that went like a knife into my heart."

Phelps has incorporated that story in the screenplay, and it's touching moments and details such as that which helped attract a starry cast – Suranne Jones, Hermione Norris, Oona Chaplin and Kerry Fox are among those bringing the characters to life.

"I think with casting we got some brilliant people in," explains Phelps. "Generally you watched the auditions, and you knew when that person had arrived. You know when that character is there!"

"It's really exciting when you know that right actor has arrived and is doing it right in front of you. That's a real thrill."

The first episode follows the fortunes of Kitty, Flora and Rosalie when they volunteer to work at a busy war hospital.

They face as tough a battle as the men at the Front – although their fight involves keeping soldiers alive and tending to their often terrible wounds.

By the end of the day the girls have been joined by Sister Joan Livesey, whose modern approach ruffles a few feathers...



Oona Chaplin stars in The Crimson Field, Sunday, BBC1, 9pm

Best of the Rest

MONDAY
Undeniable
ITV, 9pm

If the fact that this thriller is written by acclaimed writer Chris Lang isn't enough to make you drop what you're doing and tune in, how about the fact that the likes of renowned actors Claire Goose and Peter Firth are signed up to the leads? Yes, we thought that might get your attention. Jane Phillips (Goose) was just seven years old at the time of a brutal attack which she survived, but left her mother dead – and the killer was never found. Now, Jane is pregnant with her second child, and as she attends an antenatal clinic, she claps eyes on the man she's adamant is responsible for her mother's death. But Andrew Rawlins (Firth) is in fact a well-respected consultant oncologist and Jane has wrongly identified suspects before...

TUESDAY
The Battle for Britain's Breakfast
BBC2, 9pm

In the red corner: TV-am, including the likes of Anne Diamond, Nick Owen, David Frost, Angela Rippon, Lorraine Kelly and Kay Burley; in the blue corner: the BBC's Breakfast Time, with the likes of Sue Cook, Jill Dando, Fern Britton, David Icke, Nick Ross and Jeremy Paxman. Thus the battle lines were drawn in 1983, when breakfast television rose to prominence and the two big players fought for supremacy for the best part of a decade. In this documentary, famous faces from morning TV shows past and present drop in to discuss what life was like before this time, when morning viewing choices were limited to educational shows or the test card, and after.

WEDNESDAY
Ian Hislop's Olden Days – The Power of the Past in Britain
BBC2, 9pm

It's no secret that we British have a long-held fascination with the past, which just means that the Beeb have even more license to throw another remarkable documentary into the schedules – and Ian Hislop's added his name to the latest films. The satirist explores our obsession with the olden days, and reveals how and why we seem to constantly hark back to the past to make sense of the present. Over the next three weeks, drawing upon the work of Britain's minstrels,

THURSDAY
Digby Jones: The New Troubleshooter
BBC2, 8pm

No offence to Mary 'Queen of Shops' Portas, Alex 'The Fixer' Polizzi, or Gordon Ramsay and his Kitchen Nightmares, but for many people, the ultimate TV business guru is former ICI chairman John Harvey-Jones, better known to viewers in the 1990s as The Troubleshooter. So, Digby Jones has a big job ahead of him as he takes on the mantle for this new, three-part series – but luckily his CV suggests he's the perfect person to advise struggling businesses. The first enterprise to get the benefit of his expertise is Hereford Furniture, a family-owned company which recently recorded a loss. They grant Jones access to every area of the operation over the course of five months – but will they agree with his conclusions?

FRIDAY
The Trip to Italy
BBC2, 10pm

Series one of this Steve Coogan/Rob Brydon comedy travelogue was one of the most engaging shows of recent years, and this second episode, partly set at sea, is a welcome break from the road trip format. Aside from colouring in Coogan's relationship with his screen son (who's in Ibiza), we suspect all is not well with Brydon's screen wife; at least he lightens the mood with more default Tom Jones impressions. When the travelling mates aren't on a yacht with their Sloane ranger guide (Anthony Hopkins/Captain Bligh impression provided as standard), they're sampling more fine Italian cuisine while reflecting on middle age.

Saturday 12 April
Sunday 13 April

Shooting Dogs, BBC2, 12.05am

Undeniable, Monday, ITV, 9pm

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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.

3	16	6	5			4			17	1	5	6
	14			3	11	1	7	1	25			20
23	14	16	5	6		23		13	24	20	5	21
	8			19		1			14		2	
	10	3	11	24	8	8	21	16		17	14	8
25				21		21			21		6	
1	16	23	1	20	21		18	1	11	2	24	8
16		24			5	12					9	
2	6	8		10	26	1	17	16	R	O	23	15
1		8		24		11		21			2	
23	26	6	11	20		1		10	14	2	1	16
11		2		10	6	22	8	26			4	
21	16	5	14			9			10	21	21	3

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:												
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
S	F	B	K	O	U	N	D	H	L	P	T	Q
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
V	C	Z	E	R	G	I	A	M	W	J	Y	X

1	14	O
2	15	
3	16	R
4	17	
5	18	
6	19	
7	20	
8	21	
9	22	
10	23	
11	24	
12	25	
13	26	

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

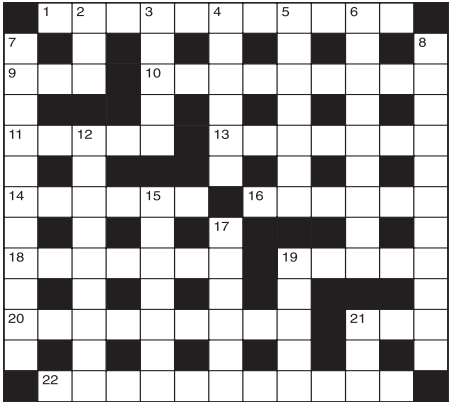
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Standard features of many thoroughfares (6-5)
- Sister who stays in a singular state (3)
- Those chosen rode with the conductor (9)
- Insist on only what is right? (5)
- Jack Brown's popular in Scotland (7)
- Time when all assets were frozen (3,3)
- Discovers Eastern secret agents (6)
- Inane is another way of putting this (7)
- Different names for a minister's house (5)
- Sid cheats perhaps and is punished (9)
- So unhealthy sounding (3)
- No more stars for star-gazers (11)

Down

- Not up to 100 mph? (3)
- Not inclined to build (5)
- Not a musical score (6)
- Dresses at first then grows weary (7)
- Trying time for a beginner (9)
- What is left (11)
- Doggedness is derived from its presence (11)
- They're a blend of the main races (9)
- Proverbially it's not an indication of gold (7)
- Time to make things palatable (6)
- Either way, it's a mode of address (5)
- One may be entitled to be called it (3)



Quick Clues:

Across

- Ruling (11)
- Single (3)
- Specific (9)
- Male duck (5)
- Correspondence (7)
- Lure (6)
- Oration (6)
- Compunction (7)
- Blackboard support (5)
- Disentangle (9)
- Colour (3)
- Unthankfulness (11)

Down

- Regret (3)
- Evade (5)
- Unceasing (3,4)
- Dignity (9)
- Unfeeling (4,7)
- Tenant (11)
- Robot (9)
- Bearer (7)
- Leave (6)
- Bring to bear (5)
- Concealed (3)

Sudoku

		4	5				6
6		3		8		5	1
1				4		2	
			1	4		7	
7					6		3
	8				3	9	
5	2		3			1	9
	3	7		6			5
		1			5	3	

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

6	2	3	1	5	9	8	4	7
1	9	8	4	2	7	3	6	5
5	4	7	8	3	6	9	1	2
3	7	2	6	1	4	5	8	9
9	6	5	2	8	3	4	7	1
8	1	4	7	9	5	6	2	3
7	5	1	9	4	8	2	3	6
2	8	9	3	6	1	7	5	4
4	3	6	5	7	2	1	9	8

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Miss; 3 Illusory; 9 Tedious; 10 Filly; 11 Disinherited; 13 Reltire; 15 Accrue; 17 Empty protest; 20 Crown; 21 Incense; 22 Refusing; 23 Digs. Down: 1 Matadors; 2 Sides; 4 Lasses; 5 Unfair choice; 6 Outwear; 7 Yo-yo; 8 Corner stones; 12 Meatless; 14 Time off; 16 Option; 18 Ennuir; 19 Scar. QUICK - Across: 1 Sewn; 3 Acquired; 9 Propose; 10 Defer; 11 Highland reel; 13 Refund; 15 Blithe; 17 Combinations; 20 Limbo; 21 Elector; 22 Sunshade; 23 Onus. Down: 1 Sapphire; 2 Wrong; 4 Cleans; 5 Underclothes; 6 Reflect; 7 Dare; 8 Polling booth; 12 Censures; 14 Footman; 16 Indeed; 18 Often; 19 Plus.

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star★extraTRAVEL

Victoria Falls

Botswana Safari and Cape Town

Beginning in Zambia, staying close to the spectacular Victoria Falls, the largest single body of falling water in the world, a sunset cruise along the mighty Zambezi on the African Queen will be the first spectacular experience. As the boat glides across this expanse of a river inhabited by hippo and crocodiles, simply relax in a wicker armchair and absorb the unique surroundings.

At Victoria Falls, a guided walking tour is included with other options to view the spectacular falls from either a cruise, a helicopter flight or from a micro-light aircraft.

On the Botswana Safari travel in a specially adapted 10-seater open-sided safari vehicle and see a wide variety of game including monkeys, warthogs and even leopards plus the chance to see cats, giraffe and elephants – it's an experience not to be forgotten so remember to pack a camera!

A second cruise, this time along the Chobe River, almost guarantees sightings of elephant and hippo, then a visit to Cape Point passes the fishing harbour of Hout Bay. Continuing on, see the breathtakingly scenic Chapman's Peak Drive, full of rugged seascapes and cliffs to the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve.

At Cape Point itself see the confluence of the Indian and Atlantic Ocean then it's on to Boulders Beach to see the resident penguin colony.

On the Winelands tour, a visit to the small town of Franschoek is included home to South Africa's most prestigious university and where period buildings and historic streets reinforce the town's dignified atmosphere. A cellar tour and tasting at the award-winning Boschendal Wine Estate is included.

The touring holiday ends in Cape Town. Take time to explore the excellent shopping and dining available, take the cable car to the summit of Table Mountain and, weather permitting, visit Robben Island where Nelson Mandela spent most of his 27 years incarceration.

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- Tour to the Cape of Good Hope
- Tour the Western Cape's Winelands
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* varies according to departure date – please go to website for the latest availability and prices

star★extraTRAVEL

Jerusalem

Galilee and the Dead Sea

Jerusalem and the Holy Land represent an extraordinary collection of both classical and Biblical sites unmatched anywhere in the world.

The ancient city of Caesarea is the first visit where a guided tour is included. Built by King Herod as capital of Roman Judea, it was the biggest port in the Eastern Mediterranean and today has a host of superb remains to explore.

Then it's on to the amazing city of Acre. Explore the beautifully vaulted and huge Knights Halls which are in a state of almost unrivalled preservation and display medieval European military architecture. A stop in Nazareth is then made to visit the great church of the annunciation before continuing on to Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee.

Crossing the Sea of Galilee by boat a visit is made to Capernaum, where Jesus lived, and nearby is Tabgha, the site of the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000. Overlooking the whole area is the Mount of Beatitudes, where Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount.

Surrounded by haunting desert scenery is the Dead Sea. Take a dip and bob like a cork – definitely one of life's must-do experiences! Then journey to the spectacular fortress of Masada, the site of one of the ancient Roman's greatest sieges and where the desert climate has preserved the site and the eight Roman encampments surrounding the fortress.

In Jerusalem there's so much to see and experience. Visit the Mount of Olives and the world's oldest continually used cemetery for a panoramic view of the ancient city, punctuated by the beautiful Dome of the Rock where Muhammed rose to heaven.

After touring the Garden of Gethsemane, enter the warren of streets and alleyways that make up the Old City. Visit the Western Wall and walk along the Via Dolorosa before finally arriving at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre built over Golgotha where Jesus was crucified. The decoration here is astounding and contains the final five Stations of the Cross, the church is uniquely shared between the Catholic, Orthodox and Armenian churches.

A visit to the Yad Vashem is where the Holocaust memorial is located and the Shrine of the Book where the Dead Sea Scrolls are displayed.

Finally, arriving in Bethlehem, visit the Church of the Nativity and Shepherd's Fields. It is one of the oldest churches in the Holy Land still in use and marks the site where the Virgin Mary is said to have given birth to Jesus.

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- Visit Masada, the Sermon on the Mount and Church of the Multiplication
- See Nazareth and the Church of the Annunciation
- Guided visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre
- Visit the Dome of the Rock and the Western Wall
- Visit Bethlehem and the Church of the Nativity
- See the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Yad Vashem
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HALESOWEN, Bromsgrove Road£875 pcm - Fees
Located in the desirable area of Romsley. This unfurnished semi detached house features gas central heating, modern and spacious lounge, fitted kitchen, conservatory, 3 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, loft space, front & rear gardens, garage, fantastic views. Viewing strongly recommended. EPC: E



HALESOWEN, Newton Court£750 pcm - Fees
A recently converted 3 bedroom 1st floor apartment finished to an extremely high standard and centrally located with commuter links to Halesowen and Birmingham. Featuring 2 double bedrooms, both with fitted wardrobes, 2 bathrooms, 1 single bedroom, secondary glazing throughout. Allocated parking. Viewings recommended. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Nimmings Road£650 pcm - Fees
Large end terraced property close to Blackheath Town Centre & Rowley Regis Train Station. Featuring a spacious lounge, fitted kitchen/dining area, 3 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, central heating, double glazing, rear garden with garage to rear of property - driveway parking for up to 3 cars. Available immediately. EPC: D



BIRMINGHAM, City Heights£650 pcm - Fees
A furnished 2nd floor apartment in the centre of Birmingham. Featuring 2 double bedrooms, open plan lounge/kitchen, electric storage heating, bathroom with shower, parking space, close to Snow Hill Train Station and walking distance to the city centre. Not to be missed. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Wroxley House£625 pcm - Fees
Luxury living in Hayley Green. This luxury 1st floor apartment offers spacious accommodation including open plan lounge/kitchen and diner with balcony, 2 double bedrooms, master with en-suite, further appointed bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing and allocated parking. EPC: B



BRIERLEY HILL, Stockwell Avenue£625 pcm - Fees
Early viewing is essential for this 3 bedroom semi-detached home in a popular location with accommodation comprising of entrance hall, lounge, dining room, new fitted kitchen, 3 bedrooms, re-fitted bathroom with shower, off road parking and front and rear gardens. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Cherry Orchard Avenue£600 pcm - Fees
Situating in a well sought after location of Halesowen. This well presented 2 bedroom semi detached house features 1 double and 1 large single bedroom, fitted kitchen with dining area, great size lounge, house bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, driveway parking, garage to rear, front and rear gardens. EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Middlefield Gardens£595 pcm - Fees
First floor apartment in Hurst Green. Set within well maintained gardens, this apartment features a large lounge, 2 double and 1 single bedroom, fitted kitchen with appliances, house bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, parking area and communal gardens. Available now. EPC: TBC



ROWLEY REGIS, Old Bridge Walk£550 pcm - Fees
A spacious refurbished 3 bedroom house in quiet residential area. Large lounge/dining area, fitted kitchen, 3 good size bedrooms, bathroom suite with shower. Electric central heating, rear garden with off road parking. A lovely property not to be missed. EPC: D



NETHERTON, Purlin Wharf£550 pcm - Fees
A very presentable, unfurnished 1st floor apartment on this popular development, over looking the canal. Featuring 2 double bedrooms, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen with fridge freezer, master bedroom with en-suite, family bathroom with hair wash shower only, double glazing, electric heating, 1 allocated parking space. Viewing highly recommended. EPC: B



HALESOWEN, Hawne Court£525 pcm - Fees
Located in a quiet, desirable neighbourhood is this well kept ground floor apartment situated at the end of a peaceful cul-de-sac, offering a spacious living room, modern fitted kitchen with built-in appliances, 2 double bedrooms, gas central heating, bathroom with fitted shower, allocated parking space with garage. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Upper Ashley Street£525 pcm - Fees
Set in this quiet residential area close to Blackheath Town Centre is this lovely modern mid-terrace home featuring lounge, fitted kitchen with gas oven/hob, 1 double & 1 large single bedroom, shower room, gas central heating, rear garden and parking for 2 cars. unfurnished. EPC: TBC



CRADLEY HEATH, Reddal Hill Road£525 pcm - Fees
Modern 2 bedroom ground floor flat within walking distance to shops and transport links. This property features a spacious lounge, fitted kitchen, 2 bedrooms both with fitted wardrobes, bathroom with shower, electric storage heaters, double glazing, allocated parking. Available immediately. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Cavalier Drive£525 pcm - Fees
Located within walking distance of central Halesowen. This modern unfurnished 3rd floor apartment, briefly comprising of: spacious living room with a door leading to your own balcony, fitted kitchen with white goods, 2 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, communal gardens, allocated parking space. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Peckingham Street£525 pcm - Fees
Wonderfully refurbished with original features maintained and fantastic convenience centre of town. Ring us now to view this lovely light, airy apartment, modern kitchen with new appliances and useful utility room. With 2 double bedrooms, this is a must see exceptional apartment. EPC: TBC



CRADLEY HEATH, Luanne Close£495 pcm - Fees
Situating in this popular residential area, is this top floor apartment, which overlooks the canal and has its own balcony, comprising of 2 bedrooms, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen, bathroom with shower, access to balcony from the master bedroom, gas central heating, double glazing, allocated parking. Well worth an inspection. EPC: B



HALESOWEN, Albany Court£475 pcm - Fees
An unfurnished ground floor flat in a sought after location, featuring 2 large double bedrooms, large living room, fitted kitchen, bathroom with shower. Other benefits include electric storage heating, communal gardens, parking. Available 12/04/14. EPC: TBC



BRIERLEY HILL, Foxdale Drive£475 pcm - Fees
This unfurnished and terraced property is in close proximity to both Merry Hill Shopping Centre and Brierley Hill. The house features 1 double bedroom with fitted wardrobes and 1 single bedroom, house bathroom with shower, nice size lounge, fitted kitchen, allocated parking, small front garden. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Upper Ashley Street£425 pcm - Fees
An unfurnished maisonette which has been fully refurbished and is close to local shops and bus links. This lovely flat features electric storage heating, living room, fitted kitchen, 1 double bedroom, shower room, parking space. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Apperley Way£375 pcm - Fees
Quiet location. An opportunity to acquire a spacious 1st floor flat furnished to suit apartment on the popular Homer Hill estate, comprises 1 double bedroom with fitted wardrobes, lounge with dining table and chairs/side table/coffee table, fitted kitchen with white goods, modern house bathroom with shower, driveway parking. Ideal for first time renters. EPC: F



DUDLEY, Austin House £355 pcm - Fees
Modern re-furnished ground floor flat available, communal entrance, open plan lounge with kitchen, double bedroom and shower room. Electric storage heaters, newly fitted carpet, property alarmed, allocated parking, security light. EPC: D

Property

Seven-bedroom property with spectacular views



AN ATTRACTIVE seven-bedroom house, Highcroft in Wolverhampton Road, off Charnwood Avenue, Sedgley, is for sale through Roden Boydell at £369,950.

It is of considerable style and character is in a delightful location with panoramic views.

The detached home comprises a porch, reception hall, sitting and drawing rooms, panelled dining room, dining kitchen, utility room, garden room, study, cloakroom, seven bedrooms, three en suite and bathroom. Contact Roden Boydell on 01902 881188 or visit www.rodenboydell.com



Detached bungalow has plenty of style on offer



A DELIGHTFULLY presented and stylish two-bedroomed detached bungalow, 242c Delph Road, Brierley Hill, is ideal for a couple in search of a pleasant property in a good area.

It is for sale through Jon Stanier at £154,950.

It comes with gas central heating and double glazing.

There is a porch/entrance hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, two bedrooms (the master bedroom having fitted wardrobes), conservatory and shower room.

There are gardens to the front and rear of the house and there is driveway parking for two cars at the front.

For further information contact Jon Stanier on 01384 778777 or visit www.jonstanier.co.uk





OLDBURY

REDUCED

SUNNYSBANK ROAD

- Immaculate Detached Bungalow EPC Rating C
- Lounge Fitted Kitchen Conservatory
- Three Bedrooms Master En-suite Family Bathroom W/c
- Side Garage Driveway garden To The Rear
- Internal Viewing Highly Recommended

£340,000 QUINTON 0121 4217766



HALESOWEN

REDUCED

NEWBURY CLOSE

- Modern Detached Property EPC Rating C
- Lounge Dining Room Kitchen/Breakfast Room Conservatory Cloaks W/c
- Four Bedrooms Master En-suite Family Bathroom
- Integral Garage Driveway Front and Rear Gardens
- Viewing Recommended No Upward Chain

£244,950 QUINTON 0121 4217766



OLDBURY

OAK ROAD

- Traditional Bay Fronted Link Detached Property EPC Rating C
- Lounge Dining Room Fitted Kitchen
- Three Bedrooms Family Bathroom W/c
- Benefiting From A Gas Fired Central Heating System and Double Glazing
- Side Garage Driveway Rear Garden

£199,950 QUINTON 0121 4217766



BARTLEY GREEN

PRIMROSE WOODS

- Modern Detached Property EPC Rating C
- Lounge Conservatory Fitted Kitchen Cloakroom W/c
- Three Bedrooms Shower Room
- Garage Driveway Front and Rear Gardens
- Internal Viewing Highly Recommended

£190,000 QUINTON 0121 4217766



OLDBURY

NO CHAIN

CASTLE ROAD WEST

- Extended Semi Detached Property Awaiting EPC Rating
- Lounge Dining Room Fitted Kitchen Downstairs Shower Room
- Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c
- Drive To Front Garden To The Rear
- Viewing Recommended No Upward Chain

£189,950 QUINTON 0121 4217766



QUINTON

NEW

QUINTON LANE

- Traditional Semi Detached Property Awaiting EPC Rating
- Lounge Dining Room Kitchen
- Three Bedrooms Bathroom Separate W/c
- Block Paved Drive Large Rear Garden Double Garage To The Rear
- Internal Viewing Recommended

£185,000 QUINTON 0121 4217766



QUINTON,

UPPER MEADOW ROAD

- Immaculate Bay Fronted Semi Detached Property Awaiting EPC Rating
- Lounge Kitchen-Dining Room
- Three Bedrooms Shower Room
- Benefiting From A Gas Central Heating System and Double Glazing
- Block Paved Driveway Large Rear Garden Garage To The Rear

£167,000 QUINTON 0121 4217766



QUINTON

NEW

CHICHESTER DRIVE

- Modern Semi Detached Property EPC Rating C
- Lounge/Dining Room Fitted Kitchen
- Three Bedrooms Shower Room Separate W/c
- Benefiting From A Gas Fired Central Heating System and Double Glazing
- Garage Driveway Rear Garden

£159,950 QUINTON 0121 4217766



OLDBURY

WESTMEAD DRIVE

- Modern Semi Detached Property EPC Rating D
- Lounge Spacious Kitchen-Diner
- Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c
- Garage Drive Gardens To Front Rear and Side
- Cul-de-sac Location Viewing Recommended

£140,000 QUINTON 0121 4217766



QUINTON

HIGH STREET

- Period End Terrace Property EPC Rating E
- Lounge Fitted Kitchen Conservatory
- Two Bedrooms Shower Room
- Gardens To The Front and Rear
- Internal Viewing Highly Recommended

£135,000 QUINTON 0121 4217766



OLDBURY

PINKNEY PLACE

- Semi Detached Property EPC Rating E
- Property Benefits From Double Glazing and a Gas Central Heating System
- Lounge Kitchen Cloaks W/c
- Three Bedrooms bathroom W/c
- Front and rear Gardens Shared Drive Detached Garage

£120,000 QUINTON 0121 4217766



OLDBURY

NEW

WORCESTER ROAD

- Mid Terrace Property EPC Rating D
- Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Utility/Cloakroom
- Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c
- Property benefits From A Gas Central Heating System and Double Glazing
- Driveway To The Front Garden To The rear
- A traditional mid terrace property which benefits from double glazing and a gas fired

£118,500 QUINTON 0121 4217766



WOODGATE VALLEY

OX LEASOW

- Spacious Mid Terrace Property EPC Rating D
- Lounge Kitchen-Diner Cloakroom W/c
- Three Bedrooms Family bathroom W/c
- Garage and Drive To The Front
- Garden To The Rear Of The Property

£100,000 QUINTON 0121 4217766



WOODGATE

WOODGATE GARDENS

- Mid Terraced Property EPC Rating D
- Lounge Kitchen-Diner Cloakroom W/c
- Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c
- Front and Rear Gardens
- Recently Re-furnished No Upward Chain

£99,950 QUINTON 0121 4217766



BARTLEY GREEN

S.S.T.C. similar properties Required

GRAZEBROOK CROFT

- End Terrace Property EPC Rating D
- Enclosed Patch Lounge Kitchen-Diner
- Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c
- Gardens To The Front and Rear
- Cul-de-sac Location

£90,000 QUINTON 0121 4217766



QUINTON

TO LET

GLYN FARM ROAD

- Semi Detached Property
- Lounge Dining Room Kitchen
- Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c
- Parking To The Front Garden To The Rear
- Awaiting EPC Rating

£675 pcm QUINTON 0121 4217766



QUINTON

TO LET

WORLDS END LANE

- Traditional Semi Detached Property
- Lounge Dining Room Kitchen Downstairs W/c
- Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c
- Off Road Parking To The Front Garden To The Rear
- Awaiting EPC Rating

£675pcm QUINTON 0121 4217766



QUINTON

TO LET

GLYN ROAD

- Traditional Semi Detached Property
- Lounge Dining Room Conservatory Kitchen
- Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c
- Driveway To The Front Garden To The Rear
- EPC Rating E

£650 pcm QUINTON 0121 4217766



HALESOWEN


TO LET

NIMMINGS ROAD

- End Terrace Property
- Lounge Kitchen/Dining Room
- Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c
- Two Car Drive rear Garden Garage En-bloc
- Awaiting EPC Rating


£650pcm QUINTON 0121 4217766

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QUINTON

TO LET

RIDGACRE ROAD

- Traditional Semi Detached Property
- Lounge Kitchen/Dining Room Conservatory
- Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c
- Block Paved Frontage Garden To The Rear
- EPC Rating E

£550pcm QUINTON 0121 4217766



BARTLEY GREEN

TO LET

JIGGINS LANE

- Mid Terrace Property
- Lounge Kitchen
- Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c
- Front and Rear Gardens
- EPC Rating C

£540 pcm QUINTON 0121 4217766



WOODGATE

TO LET

FALLOW WALK

- End Terrace Property
- Lounge Kitchen-Diner Cloakroom W/c
- Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c
- Double Glazed Garden To The Rear
- EPC=E

£525 PCM QUINTON 0121 4217766



ROWLEY REGIS

TO LET

FARLEY COURT

- Modern Style Apartment
- Open Plan Living Room Fitted Kitchen
- Large Double Bedroom Bathroom W/c
- Allocated Parking Area
- Awaiting EPC Rating

£450pcm QUINTON 0121 4217766

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Halesowen  Greenhill Road * Detached Split Level House * 4 Bedrooms, Gym/Bedroom 5 * 2 Ensuites * Sauna/Steam Room * Quality Fitted Kitchen * Lounge, Dining Room & Conservatory * Double Garage * EPC = D Offers in the region of £500,000	Stourbridge  Green Royde * A detached family house * 3 bedrooms * Bathroom * Lounge * Dining Room * Kitchen * Utility * Garage * Carport * Driveway parking * Good-sized gardens * Potential to extend (subject to Planning Permission) EPC=tbcb Offers in the region of £325,000	Rowley Regis  Oldbury Road * Traditional style detached house * Three bedrooms/two reception rooms * Double glazed windows to house * Former workshop/garage with variety of uses subject to Planning Approval * Extensive gardens & parking facilities EPC=E Offers in the region of £175,000	Oldbury  Plot 3 Site of 46 George Road * Link detached bungalow * Two parking spaces * Two bedrooms * L Shaped lounge/dining area * Quality fitted kitchen with host of appliances * Luxury bathroom with shower over bath * Gas boiler heating radiators * EPC = C £185,000	Oldbury  Apsley Road * Semi-detached house * Good sized plot * Garage * Three bedrooms * Two reception rooms * No chain EPC = C Offers in the region of £159,950	Oldbury  Pound Close * Extended Semi-Detached House * Through Living Room onto Sun Lounge * Kitchen/Dining room * Downstairs WC * Side Garage * Large Rear Garden EPC=E Offers in the region of £144,950	Oldbury  Oldacre Road * Terraced House * Through living room comprising living and dining area * Bathroom and separate wc * Three bedrooms * Rear garden EPC = C Offers in the region of £109,950
OLDBURY Off Kingsway  Hamilton Street * Modern Semi-Detached House * Three Bedrooms (bed 1 with ensuite) * Fitted kitchen with oven & hob * The price details a 50% share on a shared ownership basis subject to payment of rent in respect of the remaining share. EPC=C Offers in the region of £72,500	Quinton  59 White Road * Semi-detached house * 3 bedrooms * Neutral decor * Through lounge with doors to garden * Fantastic kitchen with hob, hood, oven & fridge * Gas boiler CH, DGW & Conservatory * Available now! * EPC = E Monthly rent of £775+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.	Oldbury  16 Tame Road * Modern terraced house * 3 bedrooms* Through lounge * Fitted kitchen with appliances * Gas CH & DG windows * Some blinds & neutral floor coverings * Forecourt car spaces & garden* Available from 1st May * EPC=C Monthly rent of £595+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.	Halesowen  Apartment 10 Adam Court Alexandra Road * Self contained ground floor flat * 2 bedrooms* UPVC double glazing to windows * Gas boiler/radiator heating system * Bathroom with separate shower cubicle * Fitted kitchen with appliances * EPC=D Monthly rent of £550+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.	Halesowen  59 The Drive (off Hagley Rd) * Ground floor flat * One bedroom * Kitchen with appliances * Bathroom with shower * Night storage heating * DG windows* Available soon! EPC=E Monthly rent of £395+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit req 6 weeks rent.	Cradley Heath  33 Spinners End Drive * Ground floor flat * REDUCED RENT * * Double bedroom with fitted wardrobe * Kitchen with host of appliances * White bathroom suite with shower * Convenient location * Modern neutral finish * Nice carpets, electric heating & DGW * Allocated car space * EPC=D Monthly rent of £350+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.	Halesowen  69, 69A & 69B Long Lane & 1 Parade Buildings Nimmings Rd * Investment for sale * Two lock-up shops * Two first floor flats * Total rental income £13,900 pa EPC Ratings: 69 (E), 69A (D), 69B (D), 1 Parade Buildings © Offers in the region of £155,000

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<div>Patricia Drive, Tipton</div> <div><div>NEW</div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modern Style Two Bed Semi Detached• Spacious Kitchen and Breakfast Area• Large Enclosed Rear Garden• EPC Rating D<div>£99,950</div></div>	<div>Warwick Gardens, Tividale</div> <div><div>SOLD STC</div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three Bedroom Semi Detached Home• Corner Plot In A Quite Cul De Sac• Impressive Open Plan Kitchen And Diner• EPC Rating TBC<div>£125,000</div></div>	<div>Navigation Way, Hockley</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three Bedroom Semi-Detached Townhouse• Ground Floor Kitchen and Diner• Garage and Driveway• EPC Rating D<div>£162,950</div></div>	<div>St Pauls Road, Smethwick</div> <div><div>NEW</div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Mid-Terrace Three Bedroom• Two Spacious Double Bedrooms• Close to Smethwick High Street• EPC Rating D<div>£85,000</div></div>	<div>Stone Street, Oldbury</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Top Floor Two Bedroom Modern Apartment• Very Well Presented Throughout• Master Bedroom with Ensuite• EPC Rating: C<div>£119,950</div></div>	<div>Ashwin Road, Handsworth</div> <div><div>NEW</div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mid-Terraced Three Bedroom House• Two Reception Rooms• Downstairs Bathroom• EPC TBC<div>£99,950</div></div>
<div>Birmingham Road, Oldbury</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Four Bedroom New Build Town House• Two Modern Designed Bathrooms• Parking To The Rear of Property• EPC Rating B<div>£144,950</div></div>	<div>Dingle Street, Oldbury</div> <div><div>NEW</div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two Bedroom Semi-Detached Property• Spacious Light Reception Room• Two Good Sized Bedrooms• EPC Rating D<div>£105,000</div></div>	<div>Newcomen Drive, Tipton</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Detached Four Bedroom Family Home• Extended To The Rear• Garage & Large Driveway• EPC Rating D<div>£194,950</div></div>	<div>Dagger Lane, West Bromwich</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Four Bedroom Semi-Detached Home• Two Lovely Reception Rooms• Extended Fully Equipped Kitchen• EPC Rating D<div>£249,950</div></div>	<div>Lower City Road, Tividale</div> <div><div>NEW</div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three Bedroom Semi-Detached Home• Extended Modern Fitted Kitchen• Driveway and Carport• EPC Rating D<div>£149,950</div></div>	<div>Livingstone Road, W Brom</div> <div><div>SOLD STC</div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refurbished Two Bedroom End Terrace• Situated in a Quiet Cul-De-Sac• Fitted Kitchen With Breakfast Bar• EPC Rating C<div>£105,000</div></div>
<div>Sandwell Road, Handsworth Wood</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modern Six Bedroom Town House• High Quality Fixtures & Fittings• CCTV System• EPC rating C<div>£895 + Fees Apply*</div></div>	<div>Calshot Road, Great Barr</div> <div><div>NEW</div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two Bedroom Semi-Detached Property• Two Tiered Rear Garden• Large Open Plan Lounge & Diner• EPC Rating D<div>£575 + Fees Apply*</div></div>	<div>St Christopher Close, W Brom</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three Bedroom Detached Residence• Extremely Large Garage Area• Alarmed Property• EPC Rating C<div>£650 + Fees Apply*</div></div>	<div>Stockfield Road, Yardley</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two Bedroom Semi-Detached Residence• Part Furnished Property• Brand Newly Fitted Carpets• EPC Rating: D<div>£550 + Fees Apply*</div></div>	<div>Pear tree Court, Great Barr</div> <div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two Bedroom Apartment• Neutral and Light Decor Throughout• Excellent Links To The City Centre• EPC Rating D<div>£550 + Fees Apply*</div></div>	<div>Apollo Road, Oldbury</div> <div><div>LET BY</div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two Bedroom Terraced Residence• Extended To The Rear• Elongated Rear Garden• EPC Rating D<div>£500 + Fees Apply*</div></div>

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Clancey Way, Halesowen



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Three storey townhouse comprising four bedrooms, three bathrooms and benefits from off road parking. Halesowen.

Best Street, Cradley Heath



£120,000

A four bedroom semi detached house comprising lounge/diner, kitchen, WC, drive/carport, front and rear gardens. Halesowen

Vicarage Road, Halesowen



£117,995

Situated in an established residential area, the property is in close proximity to amenities. Comprises lounge, conservatory and two bedrooms.

Masters Lane, Halesowen



£114,995

Situated in an established residential area and convenient for many local amenities this three bedroom end of terrace must be viewed. Halesowen.

Waterfall Lane, Rowley Regis



£110,000

Comprising lounge, kitchen, cellar, two bedrooms, family bathroom, front and rear gardens. Halesowen.

Green Lane, Halesowen



£75,000

This traditional mid terraced property comprises lounge, three bedrooms and rear garden. Halesowen.

Tivdale Street, Tipton



Offers Over £100,000

Terraced two bedroom property briefly comprising entrance hall, lounge, kitchen, bathroom, rear garden and allocated parking.

Aston Road, Tivdale



Offers Over £90,000

Semi detached two bedroom property briefly comprising lounge, kitchen/diner, utility, bathroom, rear garden and driveway.

Kiers Bridge Close, Tipton



Offers Over £90,000

Mid terraced two bedroom property briefly comprising entrance hall, lounge, kitchen/diner, bathroom, rear garden and allocated parking.

Southgate Way, Dudley



Offers Over £70,000

Well presented first floor two bedroom apartment briefly comprising entrance hall, lounge/kitchen, bathroom and allocated parking.

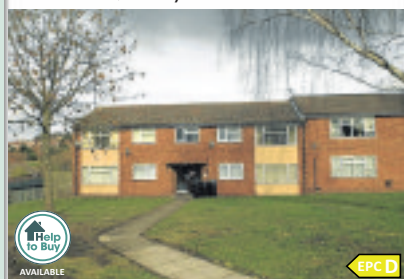
Park Road, Netherton



£70,000

A two bedroom terraced property comprising two reception rooms, downstairs bathroom and kitchen. Ideal opportunity for first time buyer.

Pleasant View, Dudley



Offers Over £60,000

First floor one bedroom flat offering entrance hallway, lounge, kitchen, bedroom, bathroom and communal gardens.

Public Notice



£80,000

NOTICE OF OFFER 30 SWAN STREET, PENSNETT, BRIERLEY HILL, WEST MIDLANDS, DY54DN. We are acting in the sale of the above property and have received an offer of £80,000. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agent before an exchange of contracts takes place. EPC RATING E

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Lexus Stay safe in style

By Graham Breeze

THE new Lexus IS300h is not just a luxury car, it's also one of the safest cars on the road, having been declared the best in its class for safety by Euro NCAP.

The amazing hybrid saloon has achieved the highest ratings in the "large family" category in NCAP's 2013 safety performance testing programme, achieving the top overall five-star rating.

The IS 300h excelled in each area of testing, including adult occupant safety, child occupant safety, pedestrian protection and safety assist features.

The hybrid version of the Lexus IS is cheaper to run than diesel rivals, thanks to its low CO2 emissions with its 2.5-litre

full hybrid powertrain posting emissions of just 99g/km. The penalty you pay is an annoying drone when you apply the pedal because of flat performance at low revs.

The sub-100g/km CO2 figure is achieved by the IS 300h SE model, fitted with 16-inch wheels, which means no annual road tax charge.

Cleaner performance is delivered by the other hybrid versions in the line-up too, both delivering emissions below 110g/km and qualifying for a zero charge in the first year of ownership.

To make the system work Lexus has produced a 141bhp/105kW electric motor and a newly developed 2.5-litre four-cylinder Atkinson cycle petrol engine that produces a maximum 178bhp/133kW.

For the techies that means the engine benefits from a new D-4S fuel injection system, Dual VVT-i intelligent variable valve timing and a high-efficiency exhaust gas recirculation system.

The rear wheels are driven through the hybrid powertrain's E-CVT transmission. Total system output is 220bhp/164kW, enabling nought to 62mph acceleration in 8.3 seconds and a 125mph top speed.

And the driver can modify the car's performance by selecting from three different drive modes: EV all-electric running, with the petrol engine switched off; Eco, for optimum fuel efficiency; Normal, and Sport, for sharper throttle response and a sportier steering setting.

The new IS range includes an F Sport model, which comes with sports-tuned suspension and electric power steering, as well as dedicated exterior and interior design features that distinguish it from the other models in the range.



The new Lexus IS range includes an F Sport model, which comes with sports-tuned suspension, electric power steering and dedicated design features

The car lacks the strong mid-range torque of turbocharged four-cylinder petrol units and diesels, so you need plenty of weight on the accelerator.

An automatic gearbox is standard and you will have no problems with the accurate steering, even if some rivals might offer a bit more precision.

The hybrid runs virtually silently on electric-only power, which I always find a little unsettling, and there is very little wind noise to help give that feeling of luxury.

You won't be stopping off at many petrol stations because the IS300h SE will give you 65mpg on the combined cycle.

Seating and comfort is as near to perfect as it gets. If you can't find a comfortable position well quite frankly it's your fault.

There's ample room for five with space to stretch out in both front and back. There's also ample boot space.

My one big complaint was the complexity of the car's infotainment set-up. It took a week behind the wheel to finally come to terms with exactly where everything was.

I would have expected to have to pay more for this car. Starting prices are at £26,495 with the range topping IS300h Premier coming in at £38,495. Those are competitive figures in this luxury sector.

Low emissions combined with exciting performance remain the challenge for the motor industry. Some companies go for one or the other. Lexus have managed to combine both and the IS300h is well worth a look when selecting from this sector.

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 06 Reg Fiesta Climate £2995 or £13pw	 07 Reg 207 HDi Sport £4495 or £21pw	 57 Reg Astra 1.4 SXi £4695 or £23pw
 07 Reg 1.2 Vauxhall Corsa £4495 or £21pw	 58 Reg Peugeot 107 £5795 or £27 pw	 07 Reg Peugeot 307 £3795 or £18 pw
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 09 Reg Insignia Sri £5995 or £28pw	 55 Reg Peugeot 307 £2495 or £25pw	 09 Reg Insignia CDTi £6295 or £29pw

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Renault's hot hatch

By John Griffiths

Renault's history is awash with small cars with sporting aspirations: only those of a certain age will remember it beat the iconic Volkswagen GTi into hot hatch territory.

That was the Renault 5 Gordini, whose crown is now worn by the 200bhp pocket rocket Clio Renaultsport, a car packed with Formula One technology. But that left an almost unbridgeable gap between itself and the standard Clio in terms of cost, running expenses and the feasibility of getting insurance for younger drivers.

Until now, that is. Enter the Renaultsport's little brother, the Clio GT-Line which borrows heavily on the head of the family's styling both inside and out, but with a smaller yet still potent engine.

Of course, it doesn't match the flagship's performance, but it's still lively on the 0-62mph sprint (9.9 seconds), it uses around 25 per cent less fuel, has a VED rating to make the taxman weep and an accessibly low insurance group of 14E.

All sound reasons for buying the GT-Line, but most convincing of all is the uprated chassis, sports tuned for superb roadholding and pin-sharp handling. And it's a whole lot of fun, too.

It's based on the new Clio which is itself no slouch, while also being sleek and contemporary with significantly more room than its predecessor.

The GT-Line naturally gets the appropriate badging, as well as larger, 17in alloys, aerodynamic rear lip spoiler and side sills, plus twin chromed tailpipes. The sporty theme continues inside with dark carbon

upholstery, chrome and black glass detailing, aluminium pedals and Renaultsport front seats.

At the heart of the beast and the secret of its success is a modest 1.2-litre engine: turbocharged to match the power and torque of conventional rivals but with the advantage of great economy.

The figures are impressive: 120bhp with a useful 190Nm of torque, 0-62mph in 9.9 seconds and yet – wait for it – the ability to average 54.3mpg. CO2 emissions are 120g/km, meaning no road tax in the first year and just £30 a year thereafter.

It's interesting to think that, with the 10p difference in petrol and diesel prices, you could be running a distinctly warm hatch for much the same as a very ordinary small family car.

Quiet

The engine is sewing machine smooth and particularly quiet: I had to check the rev counter while waiting at lights to check whether the stop/start system was working. I also confess to winding down the window to enjoy the tailpipe tune on the open road, but of course regulations these days have put a cork in growing exhausts.

It's mated to Renault's twin-clutch electronic transmission, which changes sequentially between the six gears either automatically or manually via paddles behind the steering wheel.

As befits the GT-Line's aspirations, the system is very quick: no perceptible gap in drive to the front wheels on the way up, and no causing your passengers to do nodding dog impressions on the way down.

If you're really in the mood for fun, or you want an even quicker overtake, there's the RS Drive button which takes you from nor-



Secret of its success is a modest 1.2 litre engine

mal to sport mode, considerably sharpening up engine and throttle response, gearbox mapping and steering feel. Few drivers could use a manual clutch so efficiently, and if you want to go down two or three gears to set up for a corner you just hang on to the paddle for a little longer. Simple.

The GT-Line's sports chassis is 30 per cent stiffer, with stiffer damping, than the standard car. It's a great compromise. It's nowhere near as harsh as some more focused pocket rockets on B-roads, yet in builds on the already impressive roadholding and handling of the standard Clio.

With a price tag of £17,395, the GT-Line isn't cheap but performance apart it's as well equipped as the top of the range

standard Clios. It has a seven-inch infotainment display which is at the heart of an upmarket 3D sound system, satnav and Blue Tooth.

The instrument panel, like the rest of the new Clio range, has conventional dials surrounding a large, easily visible digital speedo which allows you to keep your eyes on the road while staying safe and legal. An alarm and security system, cruise control, speed limiter, electric windows and door mirrors, tinted windows, air conditioning and split/fold rear seats are there along with the GT trim kit.

There is a full range of electronic driving aids, including ABS, emergency brake assist, traction and stability systems.

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3

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RENAULT LAGUNA V6 1999, 85,500 miles, blue, good condition, leather, full MoT, tax, £725 o.n.o. Telephone 07909 158663.

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general

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Casuals find Tivs' four-ce too much

W-ton Casuals FC 1 Tivdale FC 4

WITH a mixture of youth and fringe players, Tivdale were able to make 10 changes to the side that defeated Shepshed.

In an entertaining game Tivdale overcame Wolves Casuals with two goals each from teenagers Matt Morgan and Garfield Robinson and the result meant that Tivdale go through to the JW Hunt Cup semi-final.

In the proverbial game of two halves, Casuals took a deserved lead on 36 minutes when midfielder Nathan Jackson's looping header evaded Tivdale keeper Jack Hayfield and nestled in the net.

The second half was 12 minutes old when a heavily deflected shot from youth player Morgan brought Tivdale level. That and the introduction of substitute Ryan Winwood who literally ran the second half, transformed Tivdale and they added a second from a ball into the box, leaving a tap-in for Morgan. The goal of the game came soon after when Robinson hit a screamer into the far corner and then Robinson was on hand again to stroke home his second and Tivdale's fourth from a great cross from Matt Jukes.

Apologies end Saido spat – club

WEST Bromwich Albion have said the changing room bust-up involving Saido Berahino is done and dusted.

A spokesman said: "Tensions were understandably running high in the dressing room after Cardiff's late equaliser but the incident has been sensationalised in the media. What happened is not uncommon in a dressing room and shows the players care. The players involved have apologised. The club has drawn a line under the matter."

The England Under-21s marksman was left with a head wound when tempers flared in the wake of Saturday's 3-3 home draw with Cardiff.

The 20-year-old was involved in a verbal spat.

Defeat means Hales in wait over placing

Burton 5 OHHC 1sts1

OLD Halesonians Hockey Club's season ended with a disappointing defeat and poor performance against Burton, who leapfrogged them with a victory in the final game of the season.

Hales finished eighth in Midlands 1, and now await the news from the Midlands Regional Hockey League who are considering a league restructure. Old Hales got off to a disastrous start, as they conceded in less than two minutes. A failed aerial attempt from Paul Woodall, led to a Burton attack, and the visitors were awarded a penalty cor-

Hockey

ner which was dispatched past goalkeeper Steve Charlton.

Hales looked to bounce back, but their game plan fell apart when the hosts doubled their lead following a Hales own goal with just five minutes on the clock.

The ball deflected off Woodall. Despite an improved performance from Hales, they were unable to find a breakthrough, and Burton were able to make it 3-0 before the break. Hales looked to regroup in the

second half, but another unfortunate deflection led to Burton's fourth of the game. Mark Curzon was the unlucky defender this time. The visitors did pick up their game, and were able to grab a goal back from striker Tom Durnford. The hosts put the game to bed, when they extended their lead from another penalty corner. Simon Palmer was able to slow the ball, but the deflection off his stick spun over the line. Old Halesonians Hockey Club are hosting the West Derby Hockey for Heroes team on Sunday, as this squad of military serviceman warm-up for their greatest challenge yet

in 2015. Old Hales will host the UK-wide military team, as their visitors prepare for their attempt next year to play 32 games of hockey in 10 days, and also complete the Three Peaks Challenge. They hope to raise £30,000 for Help for Heroes, and are visiting the area in the next few weeks to spread the word about their gruelling tour across the UK next year. The game will take place at Newman University College, with a 1pm start. To find out more visit www.ohhc.org.uk, or search for West Derby Hockey Club Hockey for Heroes 2015.

Mike perks up score to give Town the win

Highgate United 2 Tipton Town 3

TIPTON TOWN once again frustrated Highgate United by backing up their semi-final cup victory over the Solihull side with a 3-2 away success in the Midlands Football Alliance League.

Town hit back from their 6-2 home defeat against

Boldmere. Smarting from that mauling, Town kicked off in a determined mood.

They took the lead on six minutes when Marvin Nisbett turned the home side's Craig Hall and then enforced Dean Curtis to divert the ball past his own goalkeeper, Chris Jay.

After further pressure by Tipton, weathered well by the home side, the scores were tied in the 11th minute. Shane Benjamin drilled home a penalty after home dangerman Lei Brown was upended when haring for goal.

Brown was in the thick of it again minutes later, when some incisive play by his colleagues, Curtis and Karl King, put him clear. His raking left-footer crashed high into the Tipton side-netting.

Mensah Kinch and Andy Dicken went close as Tipton continued to threaten. Connor Gater fully extended the home keeper after fine constructive work by Mike Perks.

And the visitors deservedly went ahead when Matt Weymann drove home in the 36th minute.

Good build-up play by skipper Chris Waterhouse, and John Hill forged openings for Matt Weyman

Football

and Marvin Nisbett as the visitors enjoyed a period of superiority.

Nisbett forced a fine stop from Jay when heading for goal to meet Danny Ashton's swinging cross.

On the stroke of half-time, though, play rapidly switched to the other end where visiting keeper James Pemberton preserved Tipton's narrow lead with a good save from dangerman Brown.

Andrew Dicken and Perks ensured Tipton began the second period on the front foot. Clever, constructive interplay between the pair threatened the home goal again only for a strong telling interception from Highgate's Craig Hall to halt their progress.

But in the 64th minute Highgate drew level when Dean Curtis was quickest to react to a loose ball in the area and lashed home.

But Highgate, while still congratulating themselves, then paid the price for a slip in concentration. Inventive play by Nisbet and Kinch engineered an opening for a gleeful Mike Perks to restore Tipton's lead with a quick-fire reply.

Bathams get on board with the big bikes



Team principal Ian Woollacott and riders Patrick Muff and Michael Rutter plus bike at Bathams Brewery

MICHAEL RUTTER will be riding BMW machinery throughout this year's British Superbike Championship and road racing campaign.

The rider from Brierley Hill officially unveiled his new motorbikes at local Bathams hostelry The Vine pub this week.

Rutter will enter the 2014 British Superbike Championship with the full backing of the Black Country brewery after they agreed to be his

main sponsors once again. He will be riding BMW 1000s under team IWR, along with Swiss rider Patrick Muff, who will be his team-mate this year in the BSB.

Rutter will also be racing at the International North West 200 road races in Northern Island, where he has already picked up 13 wins, followed by the Isle of Man TT races, where he broke a 130mph average lap around the famous 37.73 mile

course last year for the first time.

The road racing campaign will also be backed by Bathams and Rutter will form another two-man team, with Irishman Stephen Thompson.

The Bathams team will start testing this week at the Donington Park race-track. The first race of the BSB season will take place at Brands Hatch in Kent over the Easter weekend, April 19 to April 20. The North West 200 will be held in May.

Heathens need a good start says boss

WILL Pottinger is desperate to see his Cradley side build a handy lead when they face King's Lynn in what is now the first leg of the National Shield at Monmore next Tuesday.

Heathens are chasing a fourth successive success in the competition but for the first time they are racing as defending league champions.

And following last week's postponement of the first leg at the Norfolk Arena, Pottinger says his side have to go on the front foot from the start.

"It's vital for us to build up a handy lead," he said. "King's Lynn were our nearest challengers for the league title last season and they've built a good side once again."

"We will have a full team available with no fixture clashes so I'm pleased about that and hopefully we can get into them early and build up a lead."

Meanwhile Pottinger is staying relaxed despite the trade magazine, Speedway Star, making Cradley firm favourite for the league title once again in their survey of journalists around the country.

He said: "We know anything can happen during the course of a season and we need to just take every meeting as it comes."

Lambert lays down gauntlet

BOSS Paul Lambert has challenged Villa to finally secure their Premier League place and insisted they will need less than 40 points to survive.

Villa are still in danger after Saturday's 4-1 defeat to Manchester United left them 12th. They host rock-bottom Fulham on Saturday before going to struggling Crystal Palace. And Lambert insisted he doesn't believe Villa need to hit the recognised benchmark for survival to stay up.

"I don't think it will take 40 points this year," he said, with Villa eight points above the bottom three with seven games left.

"If you look at the fixtures everybody's got, it's really tough."

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Away success as
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Batham's bike
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Whiley wins title without playing

HALESOWEN'S Jordanne Whiley has returned from the US having secured back-to-back ITF 1 Series women's doubles title partnering South Africa's Kgothatso Montjane.

They were declared the winners over the weekend at the Pensacola Open, where the circumstances meant they didn't have to play a match to follow up their success two weeks ago at the Cajun Classic.

The second seeds were given a bye into the semi-finals in Pensacola before their opponents had to withdraw due to injury.

With Whiley and Montjane set for a rematch of their Cajun Classic final against top seed Lucy Shuker and Jiske Griffioen on Sunday, Griffioen was forced to pull out of the doubles final after incurring a back injury during her earlier women's singles final against fellow Dutchwoman Aniek van Koot.

"It's never the way you want to win a match or a tournament and it's certainly a unique situation, but we'll take it and it gives me a fifth successive doubles title for this season," said Whiley, who has consolidated her world No. 6 singles ranking and world No. 3 doubles ranking during the two tournaments in Louisiana and Florida.

Ex-players pass course

FORMER West Midlands footballers are among 14 ex-players who have qualified as potential club directors.

Ex-Albion defender Darren Moore, former Villa midfielder Ian Taylor, ex-Wolves and Baggies striker Jason Roberts and former Molineux forward Nathan Blake have completed the On Board course designed to prepare them for life in the boardroom.

It aims to get more directors from ethnic minorities. They have graduated from an accredited course, which is backed by football authorities including the FA and PFA.

Other than foreign owners, Manchester United are the only Premier League club with an ethnic minority board member.

Roberts said: "The more diverse the game is, the better it will become."

Old Hales put heavy loss behind them

Old Halesonians 22 Hinckley 18

HALES first team returned to league action following a heavy loss to top of the league Broadstreet last week. The earlier meeting at Hinckley in the season saw Hales totally in command in the first half but Hinckley used forward strength to win the spoils.

This game was the opposite, despite initial pressure by the home side Hales putting some useful phases together, the Hinckley defence stood strong.

After several attempts by Hales forwards to force their way over the line, it was wing Simon Sabel who collected from the base

Rugby

and scored the first try of the game 5-0.

Again a great start that gave the home support some confidence, but not for long. Hinckley picked up the pace and drove continually into the Hales defence with some great driving mauls.

The running power of the Hinckley left winger gave the visitors their first try following loose play by Hales backs. The winger intercepted to score unopposed to give them a lead 5-7.

It was Hinckley with the upper hand for

the rest of the half and without some resolute defence by Hales the game could have been over at half time. Again the visitors fed their winger who scored under the posts for a half-time lead.

After 65 minutes Hales won a line out, the ball found it's way to stalwart Tom Jordan who smashed his way from 20 yards out to score, converted by Stephen Powell 12-14. Continued pressure from kick off forced a penalty for Hales which Powell slotted to lead 15-14. Ten more minutes of constant pressure from a much improved set of backs, particularly centre Carl Robinson

whose defensive tackling was immense. Hooker Pete Fitzgerald made a break through the visitors defence in their 22 to feed centre Andy Holloway in support who scored the try of the match.

Powell took the difficult conversion but he was on a role to lead 22-14. To their credit Hinckley came back in the last five minutes for an unconverted try to give a home victory to Hales. Skipper Rich Taylor received a multiple fracture of his cheekbone which will keep him out until next season. Hales first team travel to Longton in Staffordshire this week, kick off 3pm.

Putting pressure on the Bs

Bustleholme 2 Dudley Sports 5

DUDLEY Sports took a massive step in their battle to stay in the West Midlands League Premier Division and by doing so put more pressure on Bustleholme.

Bustleholme started the better and Jason Walters almost put them ahead on two minutes when his shot came back off the bar.

Sports found the strong wind difficult and keeper Dom Richard came to their rescue on a couple of occasions. But they took the lead on 25 minutes when Craig Tibbets turned in a Jordan Harrison cross.

Bustleholme were level within five minutes when Mo Drawl raced clear and fired home. The Bs took the lead five minutes from the interval when a defensive mistake allowed Jack Whittall in.

In stoppage time Harrison was tripped in the box and he picked himself up to hammer home the resulting penalty to equalise.

Sports took control in the second half and Richie Jones put them in front on the hour mark. Harrison completed his brace and Jones added his own second.

Dorrans primed for a key role

PEPE MEL has singled out Graham Dorrans for a key role in Albion's battle for Premier League survival.

It marks a dramatic change of fortunes for the Scotland international.

But the revival of his career has been one of the positive features of the Spanish head coach's reign so far at the Hawthorns.

The Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Ketley, Telford, Thursday, April 3

SEADOGS SUNK AS YELTZ LAND PLACE

Halesowen Town 3 Scarborough Athletic 0

HALESOWEN maintained a four-point gap at the top of the table with a comfortable victory guaranteeing a play-off place at the very least.

Ben Haseley and Joe Hull both went close with early Yeltz headers, spurred on by 601 fans – the highest attendance in the whole league this season.

Haseley soon set the Yeltz on course by finishing off his 30th goal of the season from close range in the ninth minute after Iydesen Christie waltzed around a hesitant visiting rearguard missing two suspended central defenders to put the ball away in the net.

Just seconds later Haseley had an opportunity to extend the Yeltz lead but missed another glorious chance when he planted a free header which flew wide of the mark.

Curling

Jordan Thewlis posed Scarborough's main threat and he hit a 30th minute half-volley just past the post before curling over the bar six minutes before the interval.

Man-of-the-match Christie deservedly doubled the Yeltz lead smashing home a 56th minute penalty after being brought down by Matthew Plummer.

Within a minute Christie burst forward again and selflessly squared the ball to Haseley, but he was denied by a blocking save from visiting goalkeeper Jason

Football

White. The Seadogs pushed forward in the latter stages with substitute Grant Ryan and Gary Bradshaw both going close but nothing came of the attack and it was then Halesowen made sure of the victory.

Haseley made it a resounding 3-0 in the 84th minute by lofting a brilliant finish over goalkeeper White after latching onto Neil MacKenzie's through ball.

With two minutes remaining MacKenzie skilfully skipped several challenges but White turned his 20-yard shot around the post but that was academic by this stage in the game.

Halesowen Town: Sargeant; Green, Charlton (Kelly 85), MacKenzie, Hull (c), Tilt, Griffiths, Botfield (Tonks 76), Christie, Haseley (Gueyes 85), Danks.

Unused Subs: Penney, Pearson (GK).

Scarborough Athletic: White; Middleton, Sheppard, Plummer, Foot (c) (Atkinson 64), Beadle, Thewlis, Hughes (Ryan 20), Blott (Barlow 68), Bradshaw, Williams.

Unused Subs: None.

Referee: John Law.

Attendance: 601

Struggling DK get mauling from the Tigers



Heading for a collision Nick Murphy goes full tilt for Dudley Kingswinford against Sheffield Tigers

Sheffield Tigers 45 DK 8
DK travelled to fellow strugglers Sheffield Tigers with a slight degree of optimism.

However, it was not long before any thoughts of a first victory of the season were dispelled in a game riddled with errors from both teams.

In the 11th minute the Tigers opened their account. Following a line out, their forwards recycled the ball very well and eventually it was

worked to their three quarters and centre Nicholas Thomson crossed for the try. Thomas Outram added the extras. Three minutes later Sheffield were unlucky not to go further ahead when the referee disallowed them a try deeming there had been a double movement.

In the 23rd minute DK were penalised for not releasing and the home side kicked deep into Dudley territory and from the line out they

scored an identical try to the first. This time it was winger Peter Swatkins who scored. Once again Thomas Outram added the additional points.

Just before half time DK were dealt two blows. Al Francis injured a hand and was replaced by Richard Hickman and Jon Tidswell received a yellow card for persistent infringements.

Tigers took advantage of the situation and pushed further ahead.

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